The #1 Unofficial PlayStation Magazine

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Developers Ponder the Design of the PS2

PSX

Dissecting SPIDER

An Arachnid with an Attitude

Exclusive! TEKKEN 3

TWISTED METAL 2

The Hottest Tips and Tricks

INSIDE:

Soul Blade, Tobal 2, Mega Man 8, Rage Racer, Tiger Shark, Toshinden 3

March 1997
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PlayStation™

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K-A
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SONY COMPUTER ENTERTAINMENT

*(10) Orbitz bottle caps & video game proof required. Expires 5/15/97. Details inside video game. ID4 video game available 3/11/97.

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Check out our ID4 preview on page 49

As you may have noticed, we've got a new look this issue, and our art department has worked very hard to give *P.S.X.* a unique style. You will still find all of the sections that you've come to enjoy; we're just packaging them differently. I have said all along you should feel that *P.S.X.* is your magazine, and we are very interested in getting your feedback on the things we're doing right and the things that you feel we need to work on. So please send in your comments and criticism and let us know how we're doing.

In this issue we've also taken it upon ourselves to talk to the people who have made some of your favorite PlayStation games and ask them what they would like to see included in the PlayStation's next incarnation.

Of course we have a few of our own suggestions, like a six- to eight-speed CD-ROM drive and a few more megs of memory. Another thing we would change would be to put the power outside of the PlayStation to cut down on some of the overheating problems the system had early on.

This is by no means the official word from Sony, but it is at least some idea of what you might see in the second coming of the PlayStation. By talking to the game makers, we feel we can give you a better idea of what you can expect.

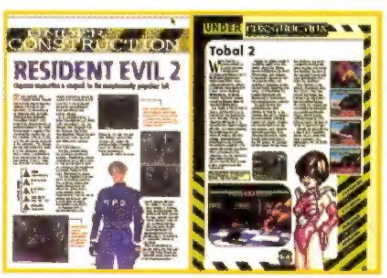
One thing is clear—of all the people we talked to, everyone feels Sony is on the right track and that the PlayStation will be around for the long term. Some even went so far as to predict that Sony will take Nintendo to school and will be victorious.

Everyone feels (or at least hopes) that the new system will be backward-compatible. That means that all of the controllers, games and anything else you enjoy using with your PlayStation will work on the new version.

Taking that concept one step further, the ideal system would allow for an upgrade kit that you could purchase that would include all of the new hardware and chip additions without having to buy an entire new PlayStation. If this is a possibility, it would be a first in the history of gaming. Sony has already carved out some history for themselves. This would take them one step further and in my opinion, put them over the top.

Enjoy the issue!

previous design new design



TODD MOWATT
EDITOR IN CHIEF

The Ultimate Guide 6 for PlayStation Games

[DIAGNOSIS › MIND BLOCK]

SYMPTOMS :

› Uncontrollable compulsion to play Super Puzzle Fighter

› Obsession with color patterns and falling gems

› Victory induced Euphoria

› Extreme competitive tendencies: gloating, etc.

[WARNING : HIGHLY CONTAGIOUS]

Rx :

› Continue regimen of frequent game playing

› Defeat friends repeatedly to relieve anxiety

"Ferociously competitive, unfairly addicting... a fantastic puzzle game... you just won't be able to stop."

★★★★

NEXT GENERATION
Oct. '96

PlayStation

SEGA SATURN

KIDS TO ADULTS

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HYDROFOIL MODE:
Approx. height above ocean surface: 5'5"
SURFACE WEAPONS:
2.75' Shrike homing missiles
2.75' Blowpipe heavy rockets
2.75' F-90 cluster munitions
25mm GAU-90 4 barrels rotary cannon
1" Stiletto salvo rockets
A killer submarine.
A deadly hydrofoil.
SUB-SURFACE WEAPONS:
2cm multiheterodyne pulse laser
3" EXT Disruptor sonic torpedo
6" Piranha heavy swarm torpedo
6" Mark-60 Thresher torpedo
6" Mark-65 Moray torpedo
6" Mark-68 Barracuda homing torpedo
SUB-SURFACE MODE:
Hull pressure resistant to 1100 meters
PROP
SENS
WEAP
nSPACE
PlayStation
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2060 A.D. The Red menace has resurfaced.

The sea boils with submarines and battlecruisers, blood and oil.

The skies are dark with enemy birds.

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Tigershark is hungry.

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GT Interactive Software

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THE TOUGHEST AND MOST ACCURATE REVIEW CREW IN THE BUSINESS TAKES A HARD LOOK AT SOUL BLADE, PLUS OTHER TITLES.

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TAKE A RIDE ON THE WILD SIDE WITH NAMCO'S NEWEST RACING TITLE, RAGE RACER.

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MEGA ACTION. MEGA EXCITEMENT. MEGA MAN 8 HAS ARRIVED, ALONG WITH OTHER GREAT TITLES.

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P.S.X. NEWS SURVEYS THE DEVELOPMENT COMMUNITY AND ASKED THEM WHAT THEY WOULD LIKE TO SEE IN THE NEXT PLAYSTATION.

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IF YOU'VE HAD A REAL BATTLE GETTING THROUGH SOVIET STRIKE, LET US BE YOUR WINGMEN. PLUS TWISTED METAL 2 CHEATS.

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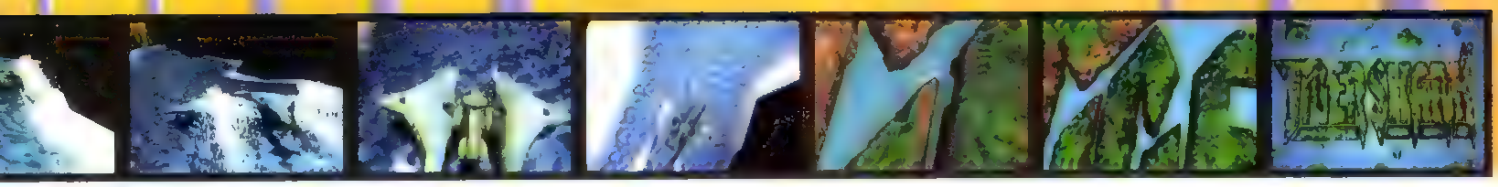

TEKKEN 3 FEATURE

WE GIVE YOU ALL OF THE DETAILS ON TEKKEN 3, INCLUDING WHEN YOU CAN EXPECT ITS PLAYSTATION DEBUT.

THE MAKING OF SPIDER

P.S.X. GOES BEHIND THE SCREENS OF BOSS' INCREDIBLE NEW PLATFORM GAME STARRING AN AMAZING ARACHNID.

THIS IMAGE AND THE SCREEN SHOTS AT THE TOP OF THE PAGE ARE FROM GT INTERACTIVE'S UNDERWATER ACTION-ADVENTURE TIGER SHARK.

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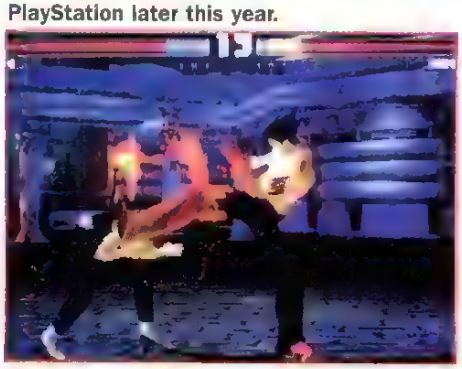
Tekken 3!!!

I am a Tekken nut and ever since I got Tekken 2 for Christmas, my friends and I have been wondering aloud when the next version of this awesome fighter will be coming to the PlayStation. One of my friends heard that Tekken 3 isn't coming to the PlayStation and that it will only be coming to the Nintendo 64. That will really make me angry. Then I thought if anyone would know about Tekken 3 and when it will be coming out, it would be you guys.
John Aramark
Irvine, CA

You and your friends aren't the only ones wondering about Tekken 3. We have been hearing the Nintendo 64 rumor as well. Let me say that this rumor is totally false. We contacted Namco and asked them directly what their plans are regarding Tekken 3. They went on the record and stated that Tekken 3 will be coming out for the Sony PlayStation. They did not say exclusively, but at least we know that it is coming out for the PS. They didn't elaborate on a time frame, but be rest assured this game will be out late summer/early fall and we can't wait. To get you started on what you can expect in Tekken 3, we have a two-page feature that outlines what additions have been included in the new arcade game. Things may change and things may be added or taken out, but we were getting so many calls, letters and e-mails on the game, we thought it was our duty to share with you any and all information we have on this great new game.

Namco has confirmed to *P.S.X.* that Tekken 3 will definitely come to the PlayStation later this year.



Web Page?

Do you guys have your own Web page? If you do, where can I find it?
Jake Dubois
Kirkland Lake,
Ontario, Canada

Our parent company Ziff Davis/SoftBank just inked a deal with Video Game Spot, and we will be having our own presence on that site. You can access the site by punching in the following Web address: www.videogamespot.com.

Memory Cards?

I'm one of those people that gaming companies and the gaming press always refer to as early adopters. I just have to have everything new as soon as it becomes available. I have two questions for you and they are both hardware-related. I am looking for a new memory card and some information regarding the new version of the PlayStation that everyone keeps alluding to. When is it coming out and why is Sony even considering making a new system when the current system is just fine and it is doing very well for them. Their timing is bad.
Adam Kelly
Flint, MI

To answer your first question, there are plenty of memory cards on the market. We have the scoop on one memory card that Datel has just released some information on. It offers 1 MB of game save storage space, which is over four times the storage offered on any of the cards on the market today. Interact will be bringing the card to market under its own brand name and it will cost $29.99. As for your second question, there are two issues here. First of all, Sony has released a new version of the current PlayStation in Japan and all they have done is make a few design changes to bring the cost of production down. Second, you may have heard rumors about a secret system that Sony is working on referred to as the PlayStation 2 or the PlayStation 64. We don't have any clear-cut information from Sony on this system yet. We did speak with developers and you'll find out what they had to say further in this issue.

Jurassic Park 2

I've been hearing that Jurassic Park 2: The Lost World is coming to the Sony PlayStation. I have been turned off by games based on movies after I bought Batman Forever for the Super Nintendo, and now I am gun-shy about

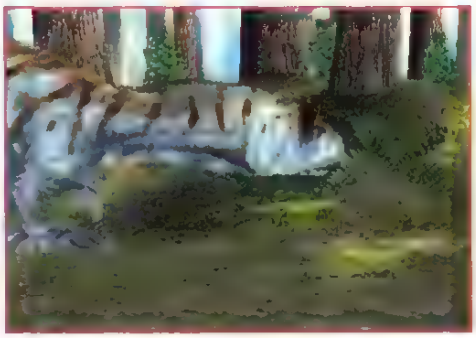
taking a chance on Jurassic Park 2: The Lost World and Independence Day. I rented Space Jam and it was cute, but I couldn't get into it. It's too much of a kid's game. Can you give me your early analysis of the aforementioned titles? Should I or shouldn't I? I'm counting on you guys for the straight goods. You guys usually tell it like it is and aren't shy about giving us the heads-up if a game isn't that good.
Peter Mathews
Pittsburgh, PA

Oh, the pressure that you guys bring to bear on yours truly is incredible and it's even giving me gray hair. Currently we do not have review copies of the games you want information on except Space Jam. I agree with your analysis on this game. As for Independence Day, this game is an average shooter that die-hard shooter fans will enjoy. It has some elements of Warhawk and some hints of Black Dawn. It has numerous missions with different objectives, as well as a large number of selectable fighters and incredibly detailed 3-D cities. We have an early preview copy of the game that has very few enemy fighters, so we can't comment right now on the level of difficulty that you will face. But ID4 shows promise. As for Jurassic Park 2, I traveled down to Dreamworks to look at the game, and it looks incredible; however, it was so early that I can't comment on the playability at all. The dinosaur renderings look spectacular and are very detailed. The game should have the same level of detail as the film. The team that is working on the game has extensive gaming knowledge and they know how to make great-playing games. We can't wait to get our hands on a finished version of Jurassic Park 2.

Sony's New PS Club

My friends have all recently purchased PlayStations, and I bought mine awhile ago Recently they got a letter in the mail from Sony talking about the introduction of a new PlayStation fan club entitled PlayStation Underground. They said if they sent in my name as one of the people they constantly beat (which isn't true by the way), that they would have a chance to win plenty of cool stuff. How can I join this club, and can you fil me in on some of the details?
Doug Foster
Ann Arbor, MI

Even I got a letter in the mail from Sony at home talking about the PlayStation Underground promotion. Here's how it works: If you filled out your warranty card for your PlayStation and sent it in or sent in the questionnaire from one of Sony's first- or third-party games, you were by all accounts added to this huge mailing list. Your friends asked for your name because if they send in names of people they defeat, they receive free minutes on Sony's game hints line. The fan club is set up to give gamers information on new promotions. For some more information on what Sony is up to, you can take a look at www.sepc.sony.com/scea on the World Wide Web to find out what kind of promotions you can expect. You can also check out www.videogamespot.com for all of the latest PlayStation information in between issues, of course. As I mentioned earlier, we will be a part of the Game Spot Web site and we will have plenty of details to come. But you can expect the same attention to detail that we pride ourselves on at our online site as we do in our printed publication. See you next month!



Jurassic Park 2: The Lost World is stampeding onto the PlayStation and will be released the same time as the movie.

Square Sports!

I've been reading about Squaresoft making—of all things—sports games. Is this true or am I hallucinating?
Jeff Griffin
Salt Lake City, UT

Square of Japan has come up with a brand-new sports franchise called Aques or Advanced Quality of Entertainment and Sports. Sony will be releasing five Square titles this year and there isn't one sports game in the bunch.

Most Frequently asked Question

Q. When is Final Fantasy VII coming to the U.S., and who is bringing it out?
A. Sony is distributing the game, and it is expected to be released in late July or early August. The reason is that it takes time to make the necessary changes to the game like translating the text from Japanese to English and other tweaks.

Net Yaroze is coming!

Net Yaroze

Want to make your own games? Sony has the ticket for serious programmers

This month, North American gamers will get the chance to tap into the PlayStation as never before—to make games, not just play them.

The Net Yaroze, a Sony-sponsored project that gives "ordinary" programmers the chance to create PS games, debuted in Japan last year. Since then, Net Yaroze members have made and shared games through the Internet. (For those keeping score, the word Yaroze, pronounced yah-row-zay, roughly translates as "let's do it!" in Japanese.)

To make these games, members must get a fully operational black PlayStation that works with both PAL and NTSC monitors, and a kit that comes with the PC software and accessories to get started.

Macintosh coders will need a different software package that must be bought separately.

In one sense, this project revives a long-gone era when video games could literally be made in someone's garage or basement.

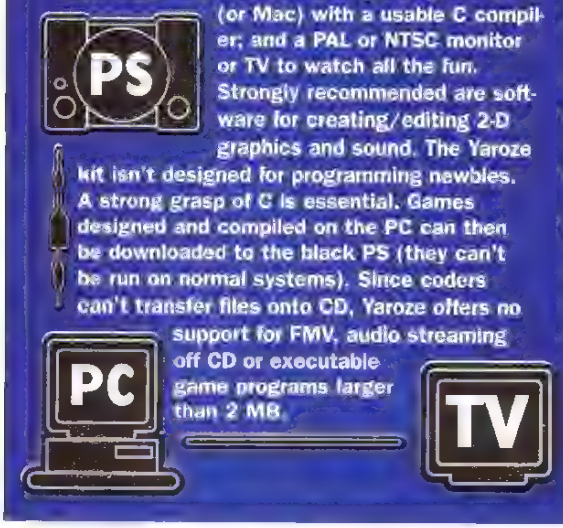
Unfortunately, the black PS kit doesn't offer all the tools available to licensed game developers such as FMV and CD management. Still, Sony points out the programming tools are strong enough to make a game like Ridge Racer, or a level from games such as Tomb Raider and WipeOut—virtually any game that can fit within standard PS memory.

More importantly, Sony has set up a network of Net Yaroze members so they can trade and compare programs, tips and even "team up" for projects. If a game looks promising, its writers might even be able to sell it to a publisher for commercial development.

Given the hefty initial investment costs for getting the kit (about $800 in Japan), plus the complexity of PS

Some technical details regarding Net Yaroze

The primary ingredients for making a Net Yaroze game: one black PlayStation system (with a boot CD, cables and a memory card); one PC (or Mac) with a usable C compiler; and a PAL or NTSC monitor or TV to watch all the fun. Strongly recommended are software for creating/editing 2-D graphics and sound. The Yaroze kit isn't designed for programming newbies. A strong grasp of C is essential. Games designed and compiled on the PC can then be downloaded to the black PS (they can't be run on normal systems). Since coders can't transfer files onto CD, Yaroze offers no support for FMV, audio streaming off CD or executable game programs larger than 2 MB.



What's top secret? Find out in this new hot gossip column. Thanks to the CIA for their help with that one...thing...

Four is the magic number this month: First, rumors about Tekken 4, which is expected for the 64-Bit PS. Namco will use the CG models from its upcoming animated motion picture to design the 3-D fighters • Look for the fatality-ridden Mortal Kombat 4 this September • And now to a four-letter word: Enix. The RPG Dragon Quest [illegible] is coming to the PS, not Nintendo [illegible] • Folks who've seen the whi[illegible] (the MPEG-compatible [illegible] in Asia) say the [illegible]

New game redefines 'plug and play'

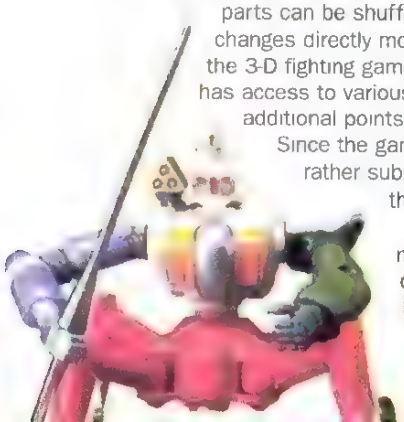
In Japan, model kits add new dimension to Bandai robot fighting game

Japanese gamers just get all the nifty PS games, don't they?

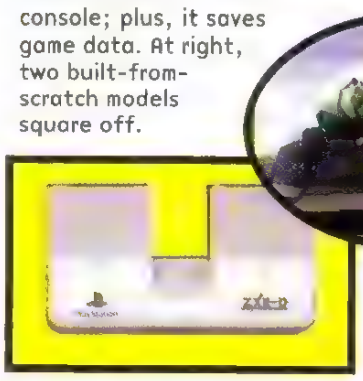
A new fighting game from Bandai, ZXE-D Legend of Plasmatite, offers more than just bits and bytes. It also comes with four full-fledged robot model kits that—get this—actually plug into the PlayStation. Not only that, the model parts can be shuffled around into new combinations. Those changes directly modify the kind of fighter that the player uses in the 3-D fighting game. Depending on what parts the robot uses, it has access to various special moves. During gameplay, robots earn additional points to power up their move lists.

Since the game retails for almost $180 in Japan (and plays rather subpar, to boot), don't expect Bandai to bring it to the United States anytime soon.

Still, for PS gamers who happen to be mech model freaks, this is certainly one product that kills two birds with one stone.



This supersized memory card (below) links the models to the console; plus, it saves game data. At right, two built-from-scratch models square off.



is coming!

game programming, the Net Yaroze project targets experienced C coders. Readers unfamiliar with C shouldn't think they can buy a kit and expect to code a level of Crash Bandicoot in a week. (If it were that easy, everyone would be a PS developer!)

In future issues, the *P.S.X.* staff will investigate in detail this "flip side" of PS video gaming, once the Net Yaroze kit comes into the offices—the staff even hopes to craft its own PS game. Stay tuned for further details...

http://cool. PS.web.site

At http://www.SEPC.sony.com/SCEA, you can play the poor man's version of Crash Bandicoot for free! Your quest? Explore Crash's good ol' stomping grounds to find seven gems and his main squeeze, Tawna. The Web adventure features several nifty Shockwave-based minigames to boot.

• Tekken 3 may need a RAM and/or VRAM upgrade to handle the massive polygon count. Could it be via some new memory card? • Now that Sony and Square have a publishing deal, how many of Square's sports titles (sold in Japan under the Ascii name) to the U.S. • The peripheral-wish list: multi-colored PS pads (already in Japan), an analog D-pad

• Silicon Knights is working on Legacy of Kain's glory, but a sequel may be in jeopardy. Publisher Eidetron and developer Crystal Dynamics can't see eye-to-eye on the project. • A classic video game, supposedly available only on Nintendo's N64—the original "Asteroids"—is still there! Just bust the high score with the initials "HVS" as the initials, then enter "YIFF!" at a special codes screen that should pop up afterward.

SCE branches unite!

Sony Computer Entertainment has decided to "consolidate" ownership of its operations in North America and Europe back to Japan.

By placing the PS brain trust under a single roof, SCE will have better leverage in guiding the global strategy for the 10-million-plus PS systems sold worldwide.

In a company statement, SCE of America's Kaz Hirai called the transfer of ownership "a highly effective way of integrating the global PlayStation operations.

"Now that the reporting relationships will parallel the working relationships, we can better concentrate on expanding the PS' leadership in North America and the world," the chief operating officer stated.

A final note: *P.S.X.* has a spankin' new home on the Internet! See it at http://www.videogamespot.com.

news

peripherals in progress

Maximizer Joystick
Nyko Tech. $49.99

The Bottom Line: This puppy sports a button cluster that rotates 270 degrees to adjust to a player's preference. Plus, it has auto and turbo fire switches for all buttons (except L2, oddly enough). Rounding out the package: a huge joystick, slow-motion switch and suction cups under the base to prevent slip-'n-slide.

Fighter Stick V Jr.
Ascii (Japan) $39.99

The Bottom Line: *P.S.X.* suspects this is the joystick controller many gamers now pine for. Currently out in Japan, this pad eschews frills such as turbo fire; rather, the focus is on making a simple, yet sturdy arcade-style joystick with super-sized buttons. Hopefully, Ascii will be able to offer this peripheral in North America as well.

Command Stick PS
Hori (Japan) $69.99

The Bottom Line: Hori's previous arcade stick was built to withstand maximum damage. Now, the stick is adding brains to its strong body. The stick features an LED screen that lets users program special moves (two more buttons have been added to store them). Currently, it's only out in Japan, but some import houses may have it available.

Cobra Light Gun
Nyko Tech. $39.99

The Verdict: Some guns kill; this gun overkills. That's a good thing; when it comes to terminating video game nasties, one can never have too many bullets. The Cobra offers programmable autofire from one to 15 bullets, so players never need to shoot off screen again. Add to that a rapid-fire switch, and you've got a mighty potent submachine gun. Only gripe: It's a little heavy. Rating: 9.5

Mach 1 Steering Wheel
Ascii Ent. $59.99

The Bottom Line: *P.S.X.* showed off this super steering wheel last month, but more details about it popped up after Ascii announced it will bring it to the United States. Here's the skinny: The wheel has a special thumb pad on the left and turbo fire buttons on the right. Not pictured are two pedals that'll come with the wheel.

Trans Play Controller
Nyko Tech. $29.99

The Bottom Line: That blue hue you view is actually see-through! This clear controller offers the familiar control layout, but adds slow motion and independent turbo fire to its resumé. LEDs show which fire buttons are turbo-fire ready.

PlayCommander
Unknown $4.99

The Bottom Line: 1996's "Why Didn't I Think of This Before" award should go to this cheap yet oh-so-smart piece of plastic. Stick it on top of the standard PS pad, and never complain about crappy diagonal movement again. Plus, there's no need to buy a brand-new controller. *P.S.X.* expects some company will bring this bright idea over here.

Gamepad
Alps Int. $39.95

The Verdict: Don't call this pad a replacement controller, because this is one pad you'll never want to replace. This top-of-the-line PS pad features an eye-catching design and an oversized comfortable rubber grip. Keep an eye out too for a limited edition of this controller that sports an all-red color. Only gripe: Keyboard-type players may not like the button layout. Rating: 9.5

Proof That Demons Do Exist

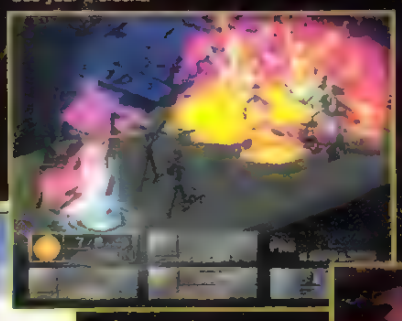
In the near future, mankind has conquered dimensional travel but the portal we have opened swings both ways. The peaceful city you have grown up in has become a haven for dark creatures from another world — Demons! Now it's up to you and your friends to harness the hidden power within you by entering the fantasy game known as Persona.

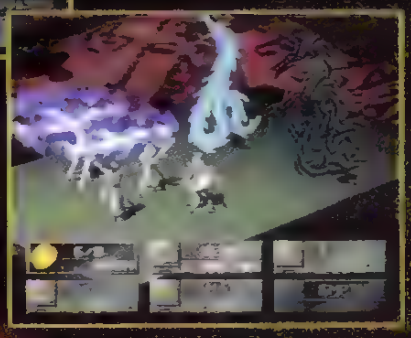
You awaken with incredible abilities that you will need to defeat the scores of Demon invaders and cleanse the land of their forces. Converse with them before doing battle to determine your best course of action. Fight them or enlist their aid in your mission. Either way, you are set for the fantasy adventure of a lifetime!

Special Features

- Based on the ultra-popular, mega-hit, Megami Tensei series: first time to hit US shores
- 100+ hours of pulse pounding gameplay
- Over 300 different monsters to do battle with
- Morph any member of your party into a more powerful source known as "Persona"
- Fight your way to one of many endings

Persona™





ATLUS

RP

"Persona" is the first chapter of the REVELATIONS

PlayStation

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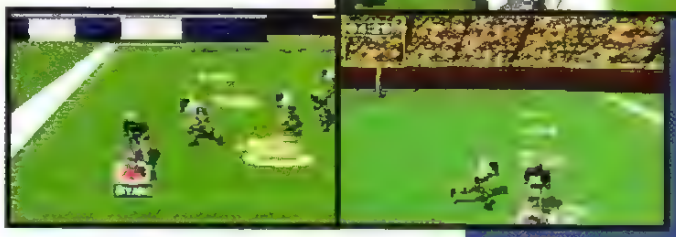
Call 1-800-771-3772 for Game Rating Information.

PSX Rated

NFL GAMEDAY '97

"NFL GameDay '97 is the football game of the year."



It's finally here and congratulations to Sony for creating the most well-rounded football product ever made for any gaming system. Sony did their homework, talked some trash early on and played Madden 97 blindfolded. But they did what they set out to do—they delivered a better game. You can play defense in this game and you can't find too many plays that you can run over and over for big yardage. If you think you've found a money play (except on the easiest setting), the artificial intelligence in GameDay will get wise to what you are doing and shut you down. As for offense, this is where the innovations really begin. In the middle of a route you can get the receiver to cut it short or change the route in the middle of the play. The ability to do this is a first in any console video game and separates GameDay '97 from its predecessors. If you already bought Madden 97 and thought you had the best football game for the PlayStation, think again. GameDay '97 is the bomb. The only criticism that I have is: What was Sony thinking when they released NCAA GameBreaker College football before they released GameDay '97? This was the biggest mistake Sony made in my opinion. In terms of gameplay, there is very little if anything that I could find wrong with this game. We have been playing the heck out of it trying to find something wrong. Most of the problems we have with this game are cosmetic and very minor. Sony is the king of the gaming gridiron this year and they handed Madden 97 a loss

TODD'S FAVES

Todd has been hitting the waves quite a bit lately with single Trac's hot racer, Jet Moto. He's also quite taken with NHL FaceOff '97 and GameDay '97.

todd

Developer: Sony Int. Publisher: SCEA
# of Players: 1-8 Type of Game: Football Memory Card: 6-12 slots

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
90	92	98	98	95

Counterpoints

dindo

This was one of the most anticipated games on my list and I'm really glad this sequel delivers the same or even better impact as the original GameDay title. The overall gameplay has greatly improved. Various new offensive and defensive plays offer depth to the gameplay. Like what Todd said about the routes of receivers, you can break off from your original route and do a hitch or slant and the QB will still throw at your numbers. I do disagree with the NCAA GameBreaker thing. That's another whole game and that's another story. I have to admit, though, this barely beats Madden 97 in my books.

Sony has outdone themselves this time. GameDay '97 has more options than any other football game on the market. The innovative passing system is the most impressive feature to this years' version. It's great to be able to break off from a pattern and still have the quarterback hit you in stride. The AI gives you some of the toughest defense that I've ever come up against. It seems to me that everybody wants to know how this stacks up to Madden 97. Well, with all the great new features, I still find Madden 97 more enjoyable to play. But football zealots will definitely want to put this to the test.

dave

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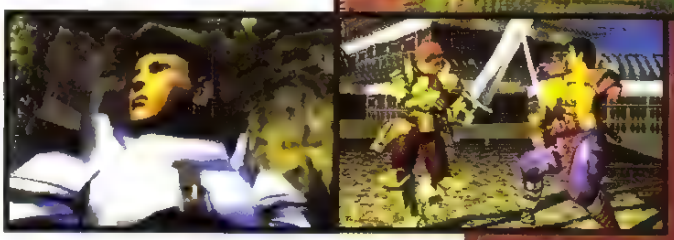
PSX Rated

SOUL BLADE

"This is a quality fighting game which is a bit too simple."



I had high hopes for this game, the next fighting title from the creators of Tekken. When I played it in the arcade, however, I was disappointed by the jerky movements and the simplistic controls. Having spent a little more time with it, I have to admit that my first impression didn't do this game justice...but it's still no Tekken.

Granted, the attacks in Soul Blade (called Soul Edge in Japan) are much less complex than in Tekken, which make the game easier to pick up for the first-time gamer; combos, for example, can now be pulled off simply by pressing all three attack buttons simultaneously. Unfortunately, this will probably lessen the replay value for more seasoned fighting veterans. The higher difficulty levels help a bit, but when the basic fighting engine is so simple, the game can get monotonous after a lot of play.

This game does have a lot of good points, however. One of these is the Edge Master Mode, a kind of Puzzle Mode which forces the player to fight with a particular handicap. For example, certain enemies can only be beat by knocking them out of the ring, while others can suffer damage only while in the air.

The Practice Mode is done particularly well, also; instead of standing passively, the enemy can now be activated so that the practice is more like actual combat. All in all, this is a quality fighting game that's a bit too simple for my tastes. If you like to have to practice to do well in fighting games, this is not for you.

JOE'S FAVES

Puzzle Fighter is still the game that is draining most of my time. Also up there: Rage Racer, Tomb Raider and Tekken 2.

joe

Developer: Namco · Publisher: Namco
# of Players: 1 or 2 Type of Game: Fighting Memory Card: 1 slot

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
97	92	85	90	91

Counterpoints

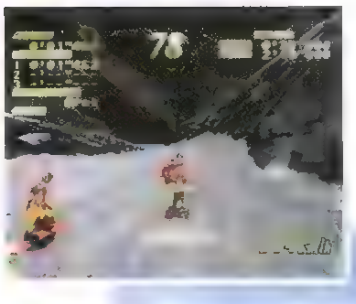
gary

The opening cinema alone is worth the price of admission. I can't wait for Namco's movie! I agree with Joe that Soul Blade's attacks and combos are extremely simplistic, but there is room for all kinds of fighters in most gamers' libraries. If players want a break from a highly technical fighter, such as Tobal No.1, they can reach for Soul Blade. The characters have tons of moves and are nicely designed. Namco sponsored a contest in Japan in which people could design alternate costumes for their favorite fighter, and the winners' designs were actually incorporated into Soul Blade. My only question is why weren't American fight fans allowed to participate?

Soul Blade does fall short of Tekken 2, but the variety of options makes up for it. The addition of weapons is probably my favorite feature of the game. The fighting engine allows you to do very well by just randomly hitting buttons. This will be disappointing for fighting enthusiasts, but makes the game very enjoyable for those of you who just like to beat people up. The game is visually stunning and is packed with original moves, characters and great music. Getting a glimpse of the opening cinema should give you an idea of what you are in store for with Namco's latest fighting title.

dave

shred the learning curve



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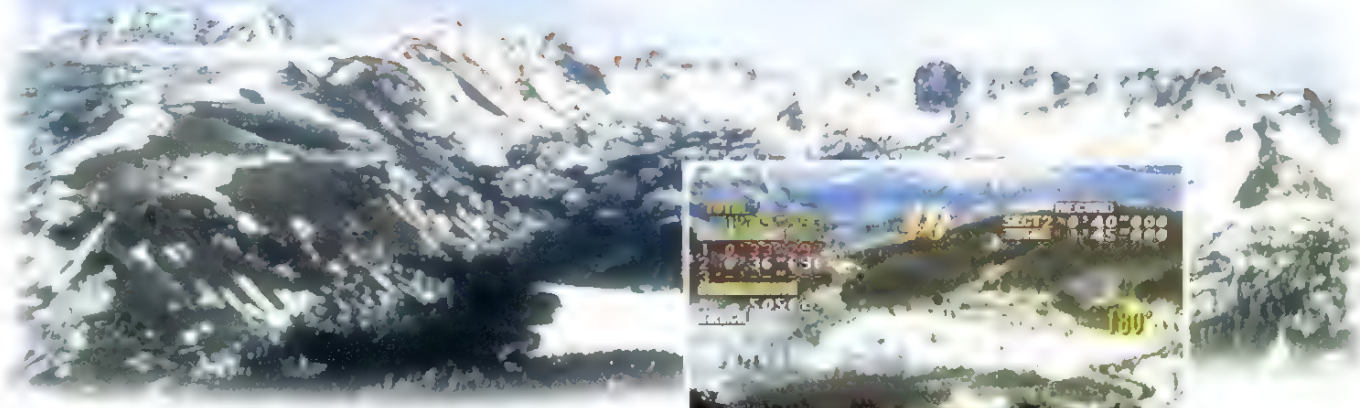


PlayStation

SONY

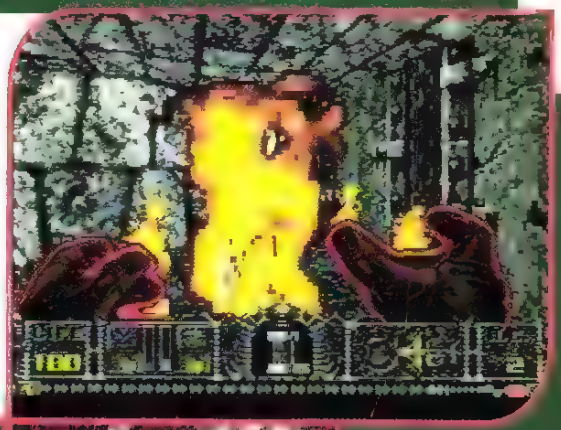
AGE TO ADULTS

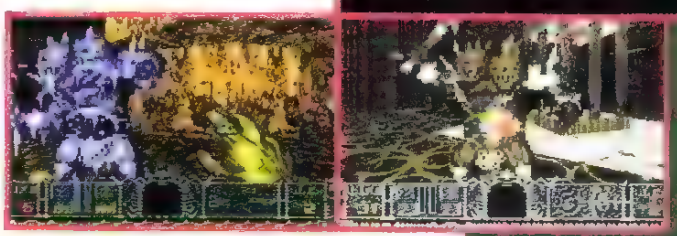
www.sony.com

PSX Rated

HEXEN

"There just isn't enough new here to hold my interest."





This 3-D corridor based slasher is standard fare for id software, designers of Wolfenstein 3D and Doom, the games that started the corridor craze. This time around, the game is set within a medieval world, and characters are equipped with weapons like maces, axes and hammers, as well as a number of spells and magical items. A few new additions, such as the ability to jump and fly, add an extra dimension to the game, but the enemies, graphics and level designs will look very familiar to players of id's earlier megahit.

The main distinction between Hexen and Doom is the choice of characters. In standard RPG fashion, players are given a choice between three different classes of characters: the warrior, the cleric and the mage. Each has different strengths and weaknesses, as well as class-specific weapons and spells.

The thing I liked most about Hexen was the fact that the enemies appeared a great deal smarter than in most other corridor shooters. Some monsters block attacks, others dodge behind obstacles, and some even split up to surround you and attack you from all sides, rather than simply lining up to get hacked down.

The bottom line is that there just isn't enough new here to hold my interest for very long. A collection of only four different weapons per character and a limited number of different enemies means that monotony sets in pretty quickly.

This one is for those who want King's Field with more action and less story. Rent it before you buy.

ALSO TRY...

For another first-person RPG-style experience, try King's Field and King's Field II. For a better take on the 3-D corridor shooter, check out Disruptor or Codename: Tenka.

joe

Developer: Raven Studios Publisher: GT Interactive
# of Players: 1 Type of Game: RPG/Action Memory Card: 1 slot

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
40	60	30	75	56

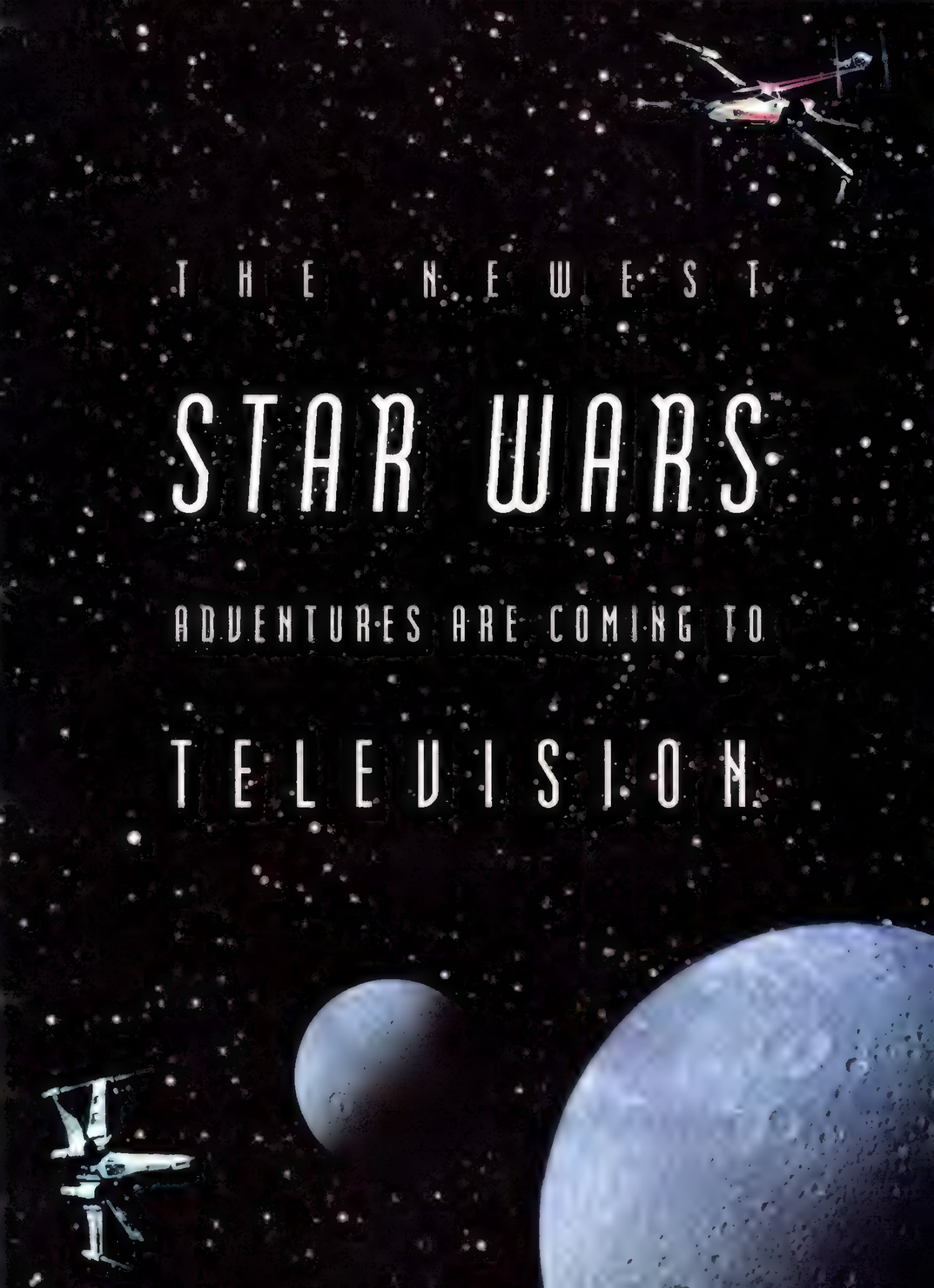
Counterpoints

gary

I agree with Joe that all Hexen really has going for it is improved enemy AI. The graphics are particularly disappointing. The enemies are heavily pixelated and have surprisingly few frames of animation. Additionally, the levels all have a grainy look that makes Hexen a real eye-sore compared to some of the high-res stuff we've seen lately on the PlayStation. Also, this whole gothic thing is getting rather old. Hexen's demonic references and imagery may have been good for some shock value a few years ago, but today it's rather trite. Finally, the level designs are unimaginative compared to Final Doom.

nelson

I assume Joe speaks for players tired of the Doom-inspired genre. I'm not one of them; thus the higher score. I love the abundance of secret areas and items in the game. Plus, the levels contain many puzzle-solving elements, making the gameplay more than just "see monster, kill monster." Yet graphically, this game could stand improvement. Monsters look too pixelated up close (a problem that has been solved in other 3-D games) and glitches literally pop up (such as monsters from behind walls). Overall, it has decent gameplay but blah looks: a game I'd date, but couldn't marry.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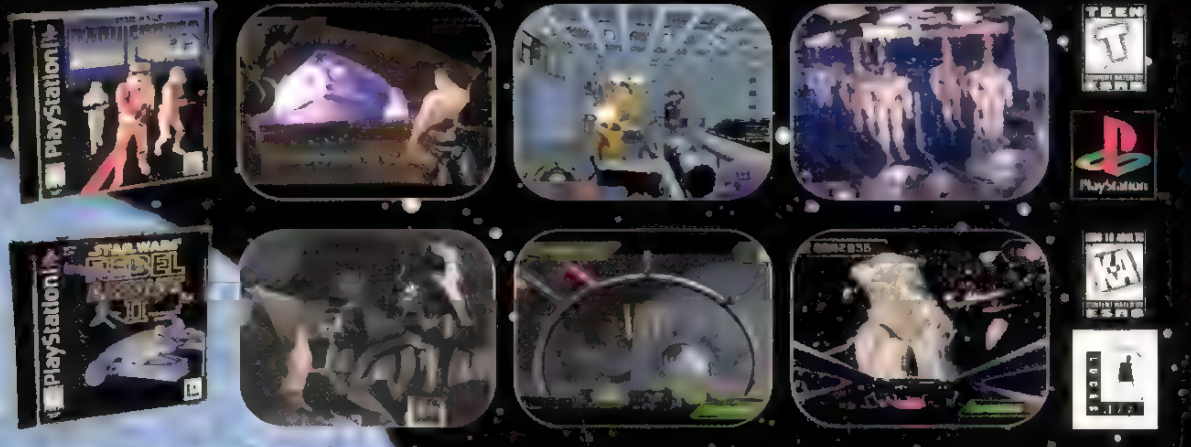

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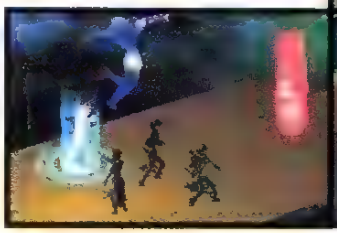
PSX Rated

PERSONA

"One of the most innovative RPGs to come along in some time."

This is one of the more innovative role-playing games to come along in quite some time. With its extensive gameplay and multiple viewing angles, this game offers more variety than the standard console RPG, instead bringing to mind the classic Ultima series on the PC (a series that I, for one, would love to see continued on the PlayStation). There are three main viewing modes: The isometric view is used for individual rooms and also for the combat screen; the first-person point of view is used when traveling through hallways within the game's many mazes; and the overhead map view is used when moving outdoors.

To me, the most intriguing feature of this game is the mode which allows players the option of negotiating with monsters instead of fighting. Players are presented with a four-way graph of the monster's emotions, and the object is to get one particular emotion to dominate the creature's disposition. For example, if you can build the fear in certain monsters to a high enough level, they will flee the battle. Others, if you arouse their interest, will offer you a gift. These can range from weapons to magical items to substantial amounts of experience points.



As is the case with most games translated from Japanese, there are a number of translation errors which affect the enjoyment level of the game. But I was surprised with the accuracy of a lot of the dialogue.

All in all, this is a game that any fan of role-playing games will want to spend a lot of time with.

ALSO TRY...

Yes, the PlayStation is still light on RPGs. If you're hungry for more of this type of game, give Suikoden a try, or hold out for Final Fantasy VII, due out later this year.

joe

Developer: Atlus Publisher: Atlus
# of Players: 1 Type of Game: RPG Memory Card: 2 blocks

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
82	78	85	85	83

Counterpoints

dindo

I'm not really fond of this game, not like the other folks in this review. Walking through halls and corridors while being attacked by random wandering monsters is not what I like in an RPG game. Plus, the overview of the city is just too modular, not interactive. I'm more into old-fashioned RPGs like the Phantasy Star series and the Final Fantasy series. Yes, the game has some great points in relation to depth and the amount of interaction with the monsters. The pursuit of upgrading your Personas is the very element of the game. The dialogue does get a bit corny, but all of that just adds to the modern RPG.

nelson

I wholeheartedly agree with Joe. I'd like to reiterate two points he made in his review: The 3-D graphics are very solid, and the battle sequences offer so many options that players will have a ball experimenting with all of them. My nitpicky gripes: slow animation with some monsters in battle, and slightly sluggish control in the 3-D isometric-viewed rooms. What prompted me to proffer a higher score than Joe, however, was the game's intricate, modern-day story line (it reminded me of *The X-Files*). Endings can vary depending on choices made during the game, which enhances replay value.

COMING MARCH 15, 1997.

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PSX Rated

REBEL ASSAULT II

"It's so much like a movie that there isn't a whole lot of freedom."

Playing Rebel Assault II is like playing a movie. This is not, however, an altogether good thing. Granted, the cinematic sequences are perfect, the sound effects are dead-on and the music is a CD-quality reproduction of the original film score. However, the problem is that the gameplay leaves a lot to be desired. Now, the thrill of being fully immersed in the *Star Wars* universe almost makes up for the superficial gameplay—but unfortunately, the key word here is "almost."

If you're a fan of *Star Wars*, there are a lot of things to like about this game. You'll see authentic costumes, vehicles and locations drawn straight from the *Star Wars* universe, all presented either in stunning laser-disc quality FMV or in high-resolution rendered animations.

If you're a fan of deep, thought-provoking, challenging games, however, this is not the title for you. You see, it's so much like a movie that there isn't really a whole lot of freedom. Much of the movement is on a "rail"; that is, you have a preset course through, say, an asteroid field, and you have a very limited space to dodge oncoming rocks. This makes it somewhat frustrating to play, since the rail will often take an unexpected turn, causing the player to veer inexplicably into obstacles.

Although it's a significant improvement over the original Rebel Assault for the PC, on the whole this game doesn't offer enough of a challenge. It's worth a rental to kill an afternoon, and it's a must for die-hard *Star Wars* fans, but that's about it. This is a fun, but vacant game.

WORDS TO LIVE BY

"You can't win, Darth. If you strike me down I shall become more powerful than you can possibly imagine."

joe

Developer: Factor 5 Publisher: LucasArts
# of Players: 1 Type of Game: Shooter Memory Card: 5 slots

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
95	95	60	65	79

Counterpoints

nelson

Joe makes some valid points, but I think his review was a bit too much on the dark side for my tastes. I agree some levels are too linear and dull (namely the shooting levels), but I really enjoyed the flight combat missions, which I feel do have replay value. As far as control goes, I didn't like how the shooting cursor also controlled flight in some situations; greater use of al top shift buttons might have offered a better solution. However, what sells this game is its *Star Wars* theme, plus the outstanding graphics, music and story line. As a Jedi wanna-be, that was enough to reel me in.

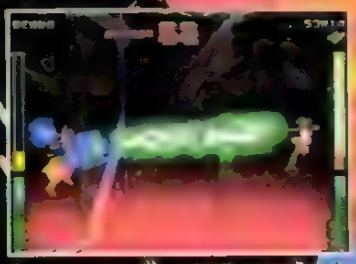
I surely think that if there's a *Star Wars* label on something, that product would sell, but the way things are with this game it would take more to get *Star Wars* fans to fight for the Alliance. First of all, the game is just too linear. The game tends to get repetitious with the set paths. If there was a way that you could fly or venture in a 3-D environment with all the flight and corridor scenarios, this would make the game comparable to that other *Star Wars* game. RA2 did improve over its predecessor, but once you're able to complete the game, you probably won't want to play it again.

dindo

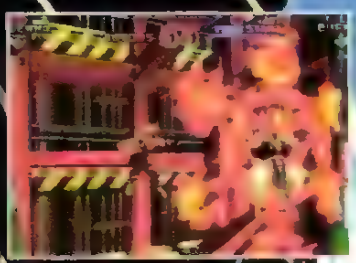
IT'S THE THOUGHT THAT KILLS!

"The next great PlayStation fighting game has arrived."
- GameFan

"...very different from anything you've ever played before." - Ultra Game Players



"...very innovative projectile weapons and background graphics" - Next Generation



"One of Zuntata's best soundtracks ever." - GameFan

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RP

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Acclaim

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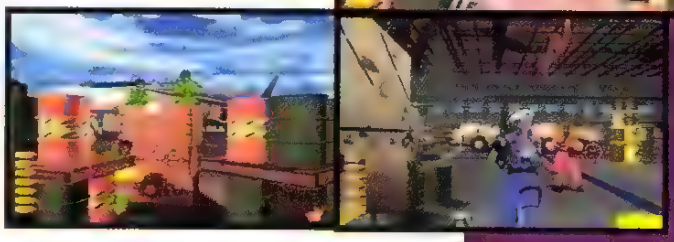
PSX Rated

AREA 51

"An adequate adaptation of the arcade shooter. No more, no less."



The PlayStation version of Area 51 is an adequate home adaptation of the arcade shooter. No more, no less. If you liked the arcade version and own a light gun, Area 51 might be for you. Otherwise, pass.

Unlike other recent gun games, Area 51 features prerendered backgrounds overlaid with 2-D digitized sprites. The result achieved mixed results; although the backgrounds are highly detailed and pan smoothly, the characters do not "inhabit" their surroundings convincingly. The most famous gun games of late, Virtua Cop 1 and 2, had polygon characters and backgrounds. The result was more convincing in my opinion. The polygon characters would clutch whichever part of their bodies was hit, resulting in great death animations. Area 51's enemies explode the same way every time.

The action in Area 51 is fast enough to hold the player's attention. The enemies are numerous and offer the occasional surprise. I liked the fact that there were a few enemies who were in such difficult places that it took several plays to hit them. The inclusion of hidden health and weapons icons has added to the replay value.

The PlayStation version of Area 51 needed some improvements. Most obviously, Area 51 needs more levels, such as the driving sequences, to be a better purchase. A better variety of power-ups and enemies would have made the game more interesting. Additionally, the inclusion of more polygon Bosses with multiple weak points, such as the end Boss, would break up the monotony a bit.

ALSO TRY...

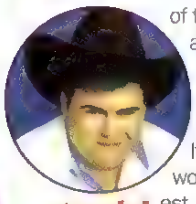
Unfortunately, there currently are no really good gun games for the PlayStation. If you like anime, you might want to check out Horned Owl. Otherwise wait for Namco's Time Crisis.

gary

Developer: Williams Publisher: Williams
# of Players: 1 or 2 Type of Game: Shooter Memory Card: 5 slots

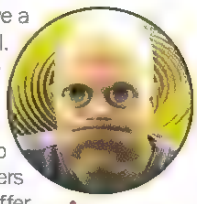
Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
75	70	40	55	60

Counterpoints



todd

I'm a huge shooter fan and I enjoyed the arcade version of this game. I agree with Gary on some of his concerns about the graphics and the overall look of the game. But I had a blast shooting my way through the game. I liked the fact that this game was challenging and that aliens popped up in the most unlikely of places. If I wanted a row of ducks to pop up in front of me I would have gone to a fall fair. This game held my interest in much the same way as its arcade cousin. The arcade game looked better. The bottom line is that if you are a fan of arcade shooters, you will definitely want to give this game a try. If not, pass on this one.



joe

There's something about shooting games that just turns me off. I mean, I was a big fan of Duck Hunt, but I have a feeling that that was largely due to the novelty of it all. Well, I hate to say it, but the novelty has now officially worn off. The only thing that redeems these games are the little touches that the developers add, like what Gary mentioned in Virtua Cop, or the ability to destroy everything in Die Hard. Still, some gamers may enjoy playing gunslinger, and this game does offer some pretty fast-paced action. If you have a light gun, you'll probably want this for your collection, but don't buy one for this game.

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PlayStation
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TEEN
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PSX Rated

OPEN ICE

"Only fans of the arcade version need apply."

The PlayStation version of Open Ice is essentially a carbon copy of a mediocre arcade game. Billed as NBA Jam on ice, the game features high-speed, three-on-three hockey action. Like Jam, Open Ice contains a variety of real-life shots, such as one-timers, as well as more fantastic player animations, like flaming slapshots.

Visually, Open Ice is an appealing game. The players are simple 2-D digitized sprites, but they are large, colorful and contain a high number of frames. The goalies, who perform a variety of pad, stick and glove saves, are particularly well-animated. In fact, Open Ice's players look so nice, they are a welcome break from the blocky, stiffly animated polygon players we've seen in many "next-gen" sports titles.

The biggest strike against Open Ice is that it is almost totally devoid of strategy. In fact, a total beginner can compete with more experienced players simply by smashing buttons. Most owners of 32-Bit game systems expect depth in sports titles. If you are such a gamer, you'll want to steer clear of Open Ice.

My second complaint is that you have complete control of only one of your team's three players. You can direct the other forward to pass or shoot the puck, but you cannot control where he skates. Even worse, you have virtually no control of the goalie. I'm sure Williams would argue that the speed of the game prohibits manual control of the goalies, but it could have been included as an option.

Only fans of the arcade version need apply.

GARY'S FAVES

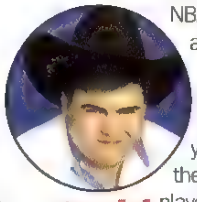
Boss' awesome platformer, Spider, really ensnared me. I also have been going old school with Namco Classics 3 and 4.

gary

Developer: Williams Publisher: Williams
# of Players: 1-4 Type of Game: Hockey Memory Card: 1 slot

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
75	77	70	75	74

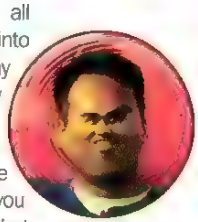
Counterpoints



todd

The basic premise of this game is easily explained. Take NBA Jam and add ice. Williams took this game and added several features of its basketball cousin. Realtime hockey simulation fans won't be too impressed with the way Open Ice looks or plays. This game is a direct conversion from the arcade game. If you enjoyed the original NBA Jam and are a hockey fan, then you will want to take the ice with this game. The players do look a little bit too cartoony and the game didn't exactly have me sitting on the edge of my seat, but it has plenty to offer casual fans of the game of hockey.

I wasn't a big fan of the arcade and I'm not at all impressed with this PlayStation version. Yes, I can get into the NBA Jam thing, but the hockey perspective is not my cup of tea, and I love hockey. There is no gameplay involved in this game. A no-brainer can figure this one out. Take the puck and score, score, score and score some more. Yes, the players are well-animated and are very much the eye candy of the game, but that's all you get in this three-on-three hockey game. I don't know what these other guys are thinking, especially Gary, but hey—no one's perfect. Open Ice doesn't get my blood pumping.

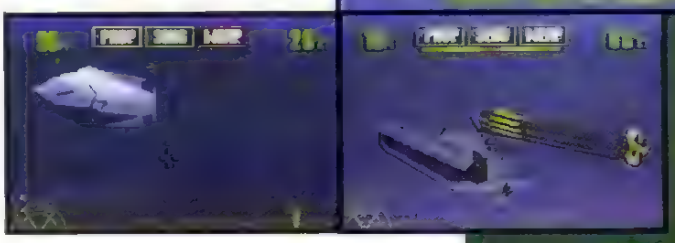


dindo

TIGER SHARK

PSX Rated

"Tiger Shark tries to be an underwater Warhawk..."



Tiger Shark tries to be an underwater version of Warhawk but ultimately falls well short of the PlayStation classic.

Like Warhawk, Tiger Shark features an open 3-D environment to freely explore, a variety of challenging missions and some truly tenacious enemies; however, sluggish control and the lack of sufficient firepower diminish the fun.

Tiger Shark does have many things going for it. The game is full of visual extras, such as schools of polygon fish and searchlights that emanate from enemy subs, sweeping the ocean floor in search of their prey. Additionally, Tiger Shark's level of difficulty is high enough to challenge experienced players, even on the easiest level. Fast-moving enemy subs circle the player's craft, making weapons lock-on tough. Another nice touch: Enemy subs create a wake behind them that rocks your craft if they pass too closely, making it hard to attack from behind.

Unfortunately, Tiger Shark's enemies seem to regenerate endlessly, making it impossible to "weed" them out before completing the main mission objective. Instead, you have to rush to each principle target, absorbing a great deal of punishment along the way. Upon dying, you must restart each level, destroying the same targets once again. Also, most weapons lack good tracking ability, so you inevitably waste much of your payload.

If GT Interactive could have fine-tuned the control and added more intense weapons, Tiger Shark could have been a contender.

BONUS TIP #1

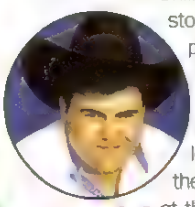
Enemy subs create a wake behind them that makes it hard to pilot your craft. Better take the direct approach and meet them head-on.

gary

Developer: N-Space Publisher: GT Interactive
# of Players: 1 Type of Game: Shooter Memory Card: 1 slot

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
75	65	85	60	71

Counterpoints



todd

Unlike Gary, I really enjoyed this game. The endless non-stop action keeps you interested the entire time you are playing. Unlike other titles that seem to have a lull in the action, there are plenty of challenging enemies and challenging missions. This game isn't easy and that's what makes it so much fun to play. I like a challenge and Tiger Shark delivers that big-time. I don't like the fact that when you are destroyed, you have to restart at the beginning of each level. An easy fix for this would have been to have a midway save point like other titles. I do agree with Gary that there could be more weaponry.

joe

This game, with its relentless speed and endless stream of enemies, reminds me of some sort of 3-D Galaga-style shooter. Looking at the game from this perspective, you might find it a little easier to enjoy than if you think of it as a flight simu ator-type game. Yes, it's less than realistic, but that obviously wasn't the intention of the developers. The controls can take a little getting used to, but once you do, it's not too difficult to maneuver. The bottom line here is the challenge. If you're easily frustrated, however, steer clear of this game. This is one for old-school shooter fans who want a little something new.

PSX Rated

HARDCORE 4X4

"One of the better off-road games available."

Hardcore 4x4 is one of the better off-road games available for the PlayStation. The four-wheel independent suspension and real-world vehicle physics make the game highly realistic in terms of graphics and gameplay. Hardcore 4x4 is a little lean in terms of technique, but who wants that in an off-road game, anyway? The way to win is simply to muscle past other trucks, hopefully causing them to roll in the process.

Hardcore's graphics are above-average, but nothing stellar. I have a slight gripe with the hyper-pixelated mud and dust effects, which look fake and make it difficult to see the track ahead. Maybe that was the point, since mud does cut down visibility in real off-road racing, but it still was annoying nonetheless. The inclusion of variable weather effects and both day and night versions of every track definitely is a plus.

Control of the vehicles is superb. The trucks realistically bounce over the rocky terrain, taking the occasional spill. Also, the handbrake feature really helps on those nasty hairpin turns. The only control problem is the reverse, which involves the use of the L1 button. The reverse was not very intuitive and was difficult to use in the heat of battle.

Hardcore 4x4's biggest fault is the total lack of a two-player option. Racing games are most enjoyable when you can go up against a friend. Additionally, many second-generation PlayStation racers are beginning to feature open, "go anywhere" terrain. That would be particularly nice in an off-road game like Hardcore 4x4.

ALSO TRY...

Like watching polygon mud fly? Here are a couple other off-road racing games available for the PS: Rally Cross by Sony and Test Drive Off-Road by Accolade.

Developer: Gremlin Interactive Publisher: ASC Games
# of Players: 1 Type of Game: Racing Memory Card: 1 block

Graphics	Sound	Originality	Gameplay	Overall
83	87	72	88	83

Counterpoints

todd

When I saw an early version of this game I wasn't all that impressed. But now that I have played the finished version, all I can say is hang onto your hats. There are six challenging courses that each has its own distinct challenge. If you are an avid off-road buff and enjoy off-road racing, you should give this game a try. The game even features four-wheel independent suspension and each of the five trucks handles incredibly well except in the snow. The thing that holds this game back is the lack of a two-player option. Racing games need two-player interaction for replayability more than anything else.

dindo

The scores for this game are pretty balanced. The independent suspension on your monster truck is realistic as well as the physics on terrain condition effects. For beginner players, it may take some time to learn the fundamentals on how to drive your truck, but that's what you get if you want realism in a game. Agreeing with Gary, visuals are not exceptional, but they do deliver their purpose. The detail in weather conditions as well as the night and day races add realism to track conditions. Being sponsored by TNN, I was hoping you could listen to some down-to-earth country music on your radio...oh, well.

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R4 PERFORMANCE

ATLUS

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RATINGS PENDING RP CONTENT RATED BY ESRB

PlayStation

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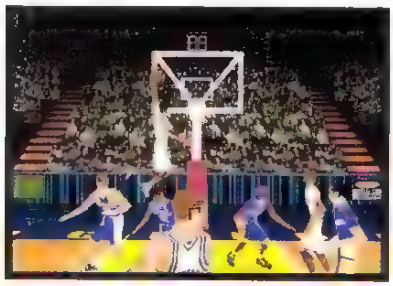
MINDSCAPE

NCAA Final Four '97

It's spring—the time of year when a young man's thoughts turn to...college basketball! March Madness has finally arrived, and this year not even your PlayStation is immune from the insanity. Mindscape Sports Authority has delivered what may very well be the ultimate NCAA college basketball PlayStation simulation.



Rock the rim with more than 50 motion-captured dunks!

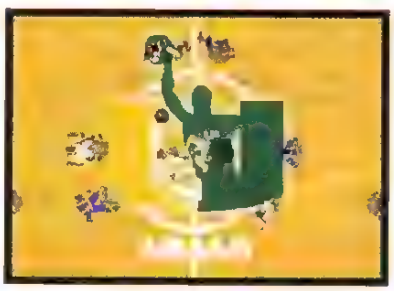
Mindscape enlisted the help of the sizzling hot design team, High Voltage, to develop what they consider to be the finest college hoops game on the market. NCAA Final Four '97 features 64 of the nation's hottest collegiate teams as well as 20 of the top National Champions of all time, such as Michigan's 1989 90 Fab Five. What's more, High Voltage painstakingly rendered all 64 "home" stadiums in 3-D, including actual crowd noises to capture the true excitement of the March Madness tourney. These stadiums are not simply cookie-cutter courts with school logos slapped on them, but instead are accurate even down to the pattern on the parquet floor.

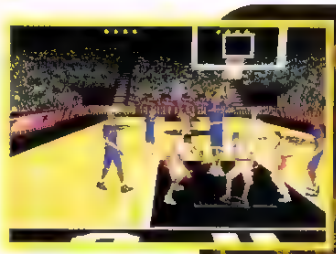
The realistic touches don't end there, however. The movements of real players were captured to animate NCAA Final Four '97's polygon players, including such nuances as head tracking, defensive stances and backing-in on the key. Players will side-step from a crouch, rather than turn and walk forward like many other basketball products. They will also switch the ball to the hand farthest away from the defender. Mindscape even included an unprecedented 50 dunk animations!

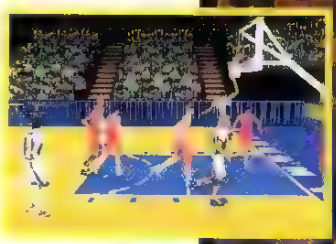
NCAA Final Four is as rich in strategy as it is in visual detail. The game has a Coach's Mode that allows gamers to create their own playbooks, make substitutions and call plays. Additionally, players can assign up to four offensive and defensive play sets to their team, calling specific plays on-the-fly. This means you won't have to take a break from the action to make offensive or defensive adjustments. You simply touch a button.

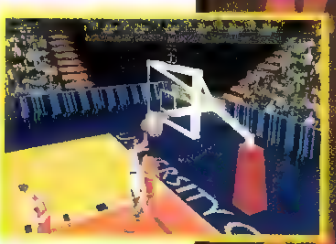
With its official NCAA and Final Four Licenses, this title is sure to give players a case of March Madness. Any sports fan would be "mad" to pass it up!

View the action from a number of angles, including overhead.









THE ROAD TO THE FINAL FOUR

There may be other college basketball sims on the market, but Mindscape's NCAA Final Four '97 is the only one to feature both NCAA and Final Four licenses to fully capture the insanity of the March Madness tournament. What this means is that gamers are able to recruit players to play for actual college teams. NCAA Final Four '97 does not utilize actual player names or their corresponding statistics; however, gamers will find that the game contains players with stats remarkably similar to actual college players. Surely this is nothing more than a timely coincidence...

The Ultimate Guide 40 for PlayStation Games

THEME
Basketball

PLAYERS
1-8

LICENSES
NCAA Final 4

CHALLENGE
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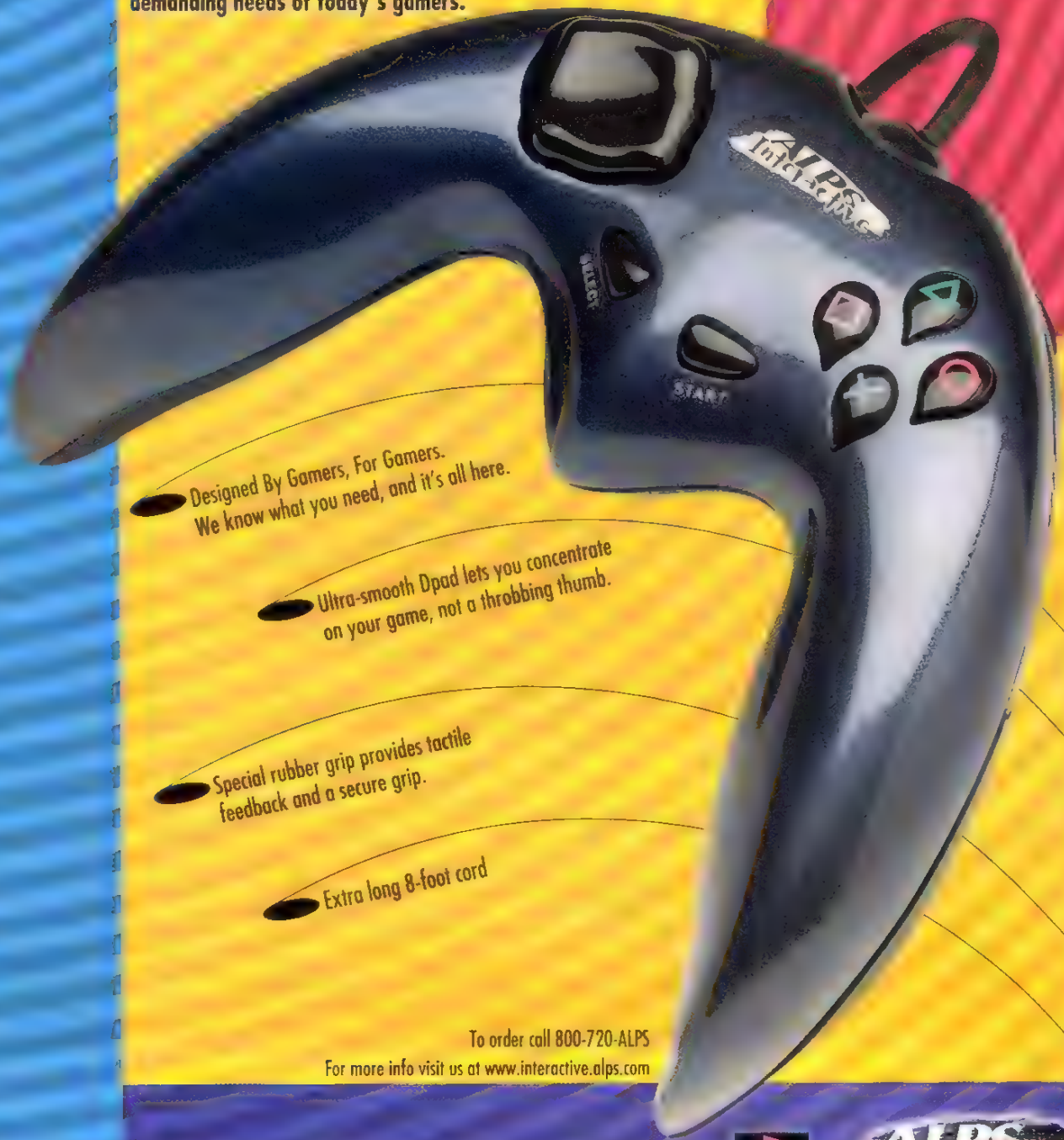
GAMEPAD



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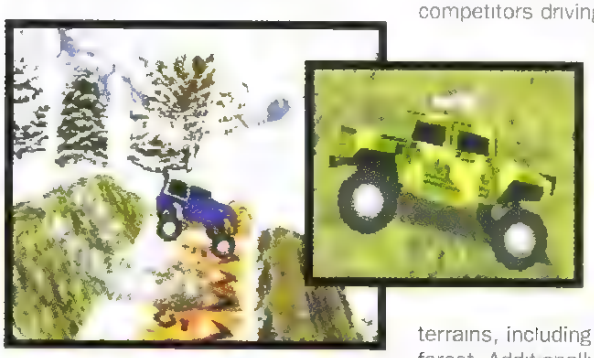
PlayStation

ALPS Interactive

ACCOLADE

Test Drive: Off-Road

Some excellent off road racing games are finally being released for the PlayStation, but Accolade's Test Drive: Off Road has a feature that almost all the others lack: open tracks for the player to freely explore! (Gasp! Choke! Other assorted noises of disbelief!)



Catch some air on Off-Road's challenging obstacles.

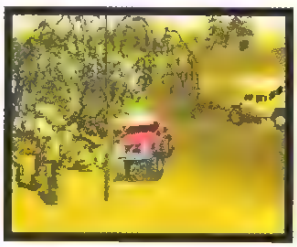
Since the main appeal of real off-roading is the opportunity to go off the beaten path for a little exploring, one would think that every 4x4 game would include this feature, but that isn't the case. Test Drive does have a basic track for racers to follow, but the player is free to deviate from the course at just about any point for some real excitement. There are icy plains, jagged rocks and other interesting types of terrain to explore, but beware; you greatly increase the likelihood of rolling your vehicle on these surfaces.

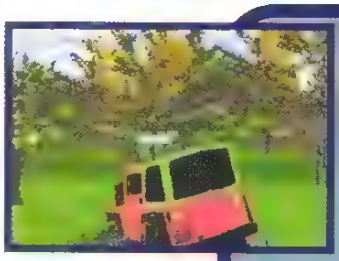
Test Drive: Off Road features four ways to play: Single Race, Full-Season, Class Leagues and Mixed Leagues. In Class Leagues, players race against competitors driving the same type of vehicle. Mixed Leagues, as the name implies, pits the player against an assortment of off-road monsters.

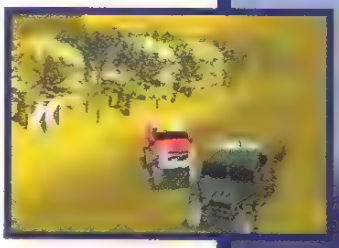
Accolade packed Test Drive with 12 different tracks, each featuring one of three challenging terrains, including desert, snow and forest. Additionally, the action can be viewed from nine different camera angles, all selectable on the fly.

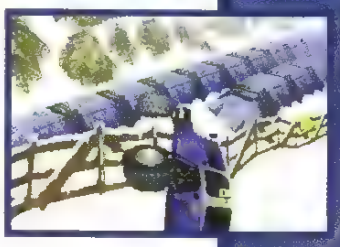
The player can go head-to-head against a friend in Split-Screen Mode or via the PlayStation's depressingly undersupported link cable.

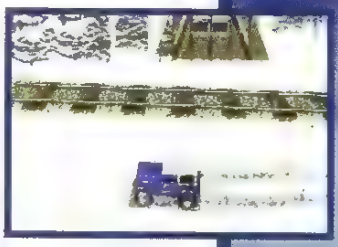
These features, plus a thumping soundtrack by Gravity Kills, make Test Drive: Off-Road a standout racer.











4x4s Galore!

Seeking to maximize realism, Accolade acquired licenses from four of the world's leading manufacturers of off-road vehicles. Test Drive: Off-Road includes an agile Jeep Wrangler, a compact but spirited Land Rover Defender 90, a monstrous Chevrolet K1500 Z71 and the Death Star of 4x4s—the Hummer! Accolade invested a great deal of time developing complex physics models to ensure the vehicles handle just like their real-world counterparts. Accolade even digitized the engine noises and dashboards from each vehicle to really create the illusion of being behind the wheel. If you don't have 50 grand to blow, Test Drive: Off-Road is the next best thing.

STARTING LINEUP

THEME

PLAYERS

LICENSES

CHALLENGE

NAMCO

Rage Racer

The latest installment in the series of realistic racing games that began with Ridge Racer has finally arrived on store shelves in Japan. Rage Racer, the intense new title from the gaming gurus at Namco, maintains many of the elements of the previous games in the enormously successful series while adding a few new elements guaranteed to make the game an entirely new experience.

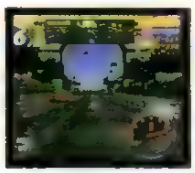
The biggest change from the previous titles is the use of money to upgrade your vehicle. Instead of awarding hidden cars or tracks for first-place finishes, Rage Racer rewards racers who place in first, second or third with credits to apply toward new vehicles or tune-ups for their present car. These prizes increase in size as the player advances through the many classes of competition.

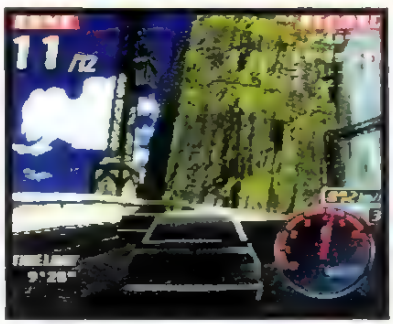
The competition itself is structured differently than in the previous games. The first class features three separate courses on one shared track. When the player places among the top three on each of the courses, he is allowed to advance to the next class, where the competition is now quicker and smarter than before. In order to succeed and advance through the classes, the player must either buy a new car (which often results in a car that excels in only one or two areas) or upgrade the present car (which improves all categories, but can get very expensive). The player must decide what exactly is needed to succeed in the upcoming race. Tracks with a number of hairpin turns require a car with good handling and quick acceleration, while those with more straightaways are best approached with a great deal of speed. For the most part, it's not necessary to purchase a car that excels in a category other than top speed, since upgrading the original car will improve it in every category.

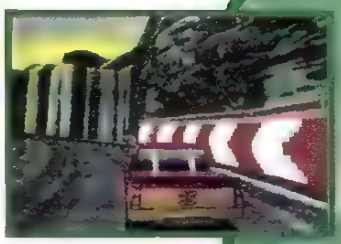
In addition, the opponents get smarter as the player advances. In the higher classes, competitors will often swerve to block out an attempt to pass, or even cut to the side to ram the player into the wall. And there will always be that one persistent car that just cannot be shaken.

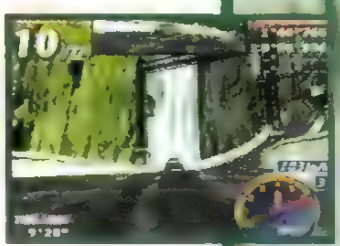
The improved graphics put Rage Racer in a completely different class from Ridge Racer Revolution. The cars, the scenery, even the time-of-day lighting effects are all greatly improved. And speaking of vehicle graphics, players can now not only choose the line and body color, but also can design their very own team logo, which will appear on the car hood and in various other locations in the game.

All in all, Rage Racer looks even better than the previous titles in Namco's racing arsenal, promising many hours of addictive gameplay for gamers.









STARTING LINEUP

THEME
Racing

PLAYERS
1

LICENSES
None

CHALLENGE
Variable

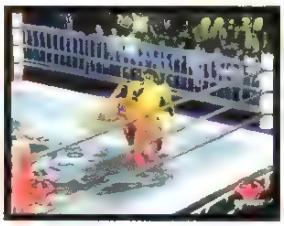
THQ

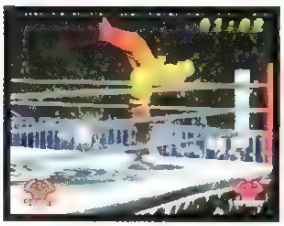
WCW vs. The World

T*HQ is heading for the ring with the second 3-D polygon wrestling game we've seen for the PlayStation. WCW vs. the World will feature appearances by a number of WCW favorites, as well as wrestlers from Japan, South America and other places around the globe. Wrestlers like "Nature Boy" Ric Flair and the Four Horsemen will meet up with wrestling heroes from other countries in a battle for global domination of the squared circle.

WCW, a wrestling league that is quickly surpassing the WWF in terms of widespread recognition and popularity, has become a favorite of wrestling fans all over the world. This being the case, it is little wonder why T*HQ chose this particular league to represent American wrestling.

With signature moves and characteristic taunts, each wrestler will have his own distinct personality. A total of over 50 wrestlers should give players plenty of opponents to conquer.

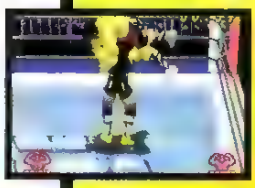




In addition, the incredible selection of moves should offer gamers quite a challenge and a high degree of playability. A full repertoire of body slams, rope tosses and signature moves will certainly make this game a favorite for two-player competition.

With its quick speed and wide variety of moves, WCW evokes comparisons to fighting games that have preceded it. The addition of hold moves and the use of the ring ropes, however, add a completely new experience to the traditional style of fighting games.

WCW vs. the World should appeal to wrestling fans as well as gamers looking for something a little different in the fighting genre. Wrestling fans, let's get ready to rumble!



STARTING LINEUP

THEME
Wrestling

PLAYERS
1 or 2

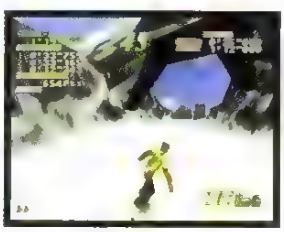
LICENSES
WCW

CHALLENGE
Moderate

SONY INT. STUDIOS

Cool Borders

If you are a fan of Namco's arcade smashes, Alpine Racer and Alpine Surfer, and are looking for a similar experience for the home, look no further. Developed by UEP Systems, Cool Borders was a hit in Japan. Now it is coming to the States, courtesy of Sony Computer Entertainment of America.



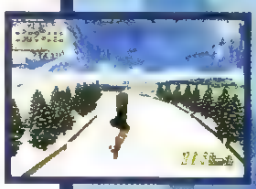
The release of Sony's 2Xtreme gave PlayStation owners a small taste of snowboarding excitement, but the game failed to deliver the illusion of racing down an icy mountain. In contrast, Cool Borders achieves this illusion so convincingly, it will have you leaning in your Lay-Z-Boy to avoid cliffs, boulders, trees, ski lifts and other perils.

Another improvement over 2Xtreme are Cool Borders' polygon characters. These characters fit the 3-D environment much more convincingly than 2Xtreme's flat, digitized competitors and can be viewed from a variety of different angles during instant replays.

Players begin by choosing from one of three challenging slopes. Then they must select the appropriate board. Players can pick one of six different boards that fall into three general categories: alpine, freestyle and all-around. Then players may select either a male or a female racer and outfit him or her in the clothing of their choice.

Once on the slopes, the goal is to race down the course as quickly as possible, performing a variety of tricks, such as backflips, fakies and stalefish grabs, for extra points. During the trip down the hill, players may select either a first person or a chase-cam view. The cool thing about the first person view is that the terrain rotates and flips 360 degrees as stunts are performed!

Now gamers can shred year 'round with the arrival of Cool Boarders.



STARTING LINEUP

THEME

PLAYERS

LICENSES

CHALLENGE

Did you know...

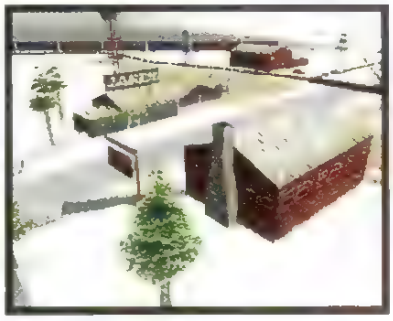
ONCE THE DOMAIN OF REBELS AND FASHION-CONSCIOUS TEENS, SNOWBOARDING HAS BECOME ONE OF THE WORLD'S RISING SPORTS, ECLIPSING HOCKEY AND TENNIS IN TV VIEWERSHIP.

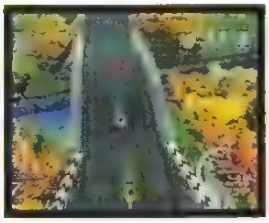
PSYGNOSIS

Rush Hour

Rush Hour, Psygnosis' latest racing project, is something a little different from their other titles. What you might expect from the creators of the WipeOut and Destruction Derby series is another futuristic or fantastic first person racer. Instead, Rush Hour features an overhead view which emphasizes the strategy of racing instead of the seat-of-your-pants surprise factor of some racing games. Players can see well ahead down Rush Hour's tracks, complete with hairpin turns, criss-cross intersections, bridges and overpasses. While this may detract slightly from the "behind the wheel" feeling, it allows the designers to develop incredibly intricate, realistic tracks without sacrificing speed or risking confusion on the part of the player.

Gamers will be able to race off-road vehicles as well as performance cars, either alone or against a friend via a Split-screen Mode. Sixteen vehicles are available, each with its own strengths and weaknesses. A number of different tracks should offer plenty of challenges, even for racing veterans. The unique perspective should offer its own challenge, but the controls should be intuitive enough to facilitate an easy crossover for fans of more traditional racing games. We are told that there will be a selection of viewing perspectives which players can choose from, but as of this writing there is no first person view included in Rush Hour at all. This could change before the final version.



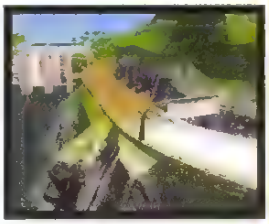


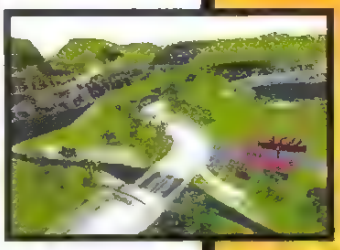
Gamers will be able to choose a number of race and replay views.

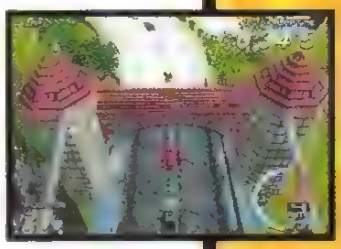
The game features seaside tracks as well as city courses, each with its own hazards. Players are able to compete in a single race, attempt to set a course record in the time trial or go for the championship on all the tracks. If If we can gauge anything from Psygnosis' other racing games, expect hidden tracks, hidden cars and plenty of challenge from Rush Hour.

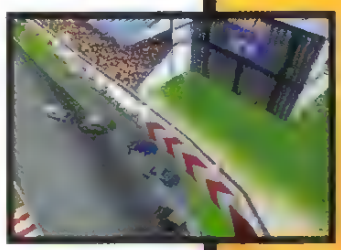
The tracks themselves are extremely detailed, with realistic buildings, highways, side streets and other scenery elements. It makes one wonder whether these tracks are drawn from actual locations.

With its unusual perspective and its wide selection of cars and tracks, Rush Hour is certain to turn heads. The competitive gameplay and Two-player Mode should keep gamers coming back for more. Racing fans will want to check this game out.









THEME
Racing

PLAYERS
1 or 2

LICENSES
None

CHALLENGE
Moderate

Tekken 3

The lines are drawn. The stage is set. The arena has been chosen...

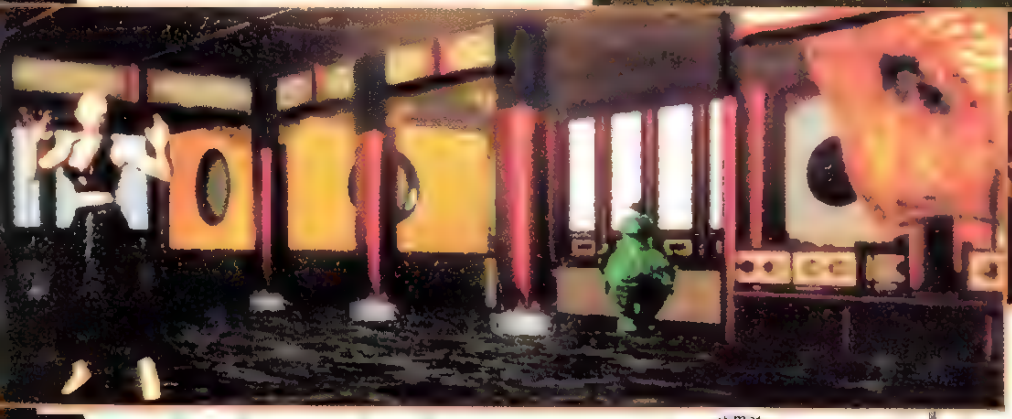
The Battle Rages On!

by Joe Rybicki

When the original Tekken hit the arcades, it demolished its competition. Virtua Fighter, the only comparable title, was unable to counter Tekken's blazing speed and spectacular graphics. Virtua Fighter 2 put up a bit more of a fight, but Tekken 2 was already in the works, and soon arcades were swamped with gamers lining up to participate in the newest Iron Fisted competition. Meanwhile, Tekken had reached the home market in a perfect (and in some ways better) translation of the arcade version for the PlayStation. And soon, gamers were able to play Tekken 2 at home with a version that was unanimously hailed as being superior to the arcade. All looked forward to the arrival of Tekken 3. Now the wait is nearly over.

Speculation has been flying about the future prospects of this much-anticipated game. Will it be released for the PlayStation or the not yet-officially-confirmed PlayStation 2? Or will Namco's rumored deals with Nintendo result in the game's passing over PlayStation owners altogether? It is being said that the game runs on hardware which is different from the original PlayStation (unlike the previous versions of the game, which used an only slightly modified version of the PS hardware in the arcade).

We went directly to Namco in an effort to straighten out the rumors that have been circulating lately, and what we discovered should please PlayStation owners and Tekken fans alike: **Tekken 3 is definitely being developed for the PlayStation.** This is not a guess, or idle speculation, but rather the official word from the developers themselves. (What was not



specified was whether the development is for the present incarnation of the PlayStation or some future model.)

Now, seeing as how the game we saw was the arcade version, we could see some significant changes when the home version is released. Still, if Namco's past performance is any indication, the home version should be every bit as good as the arcade.

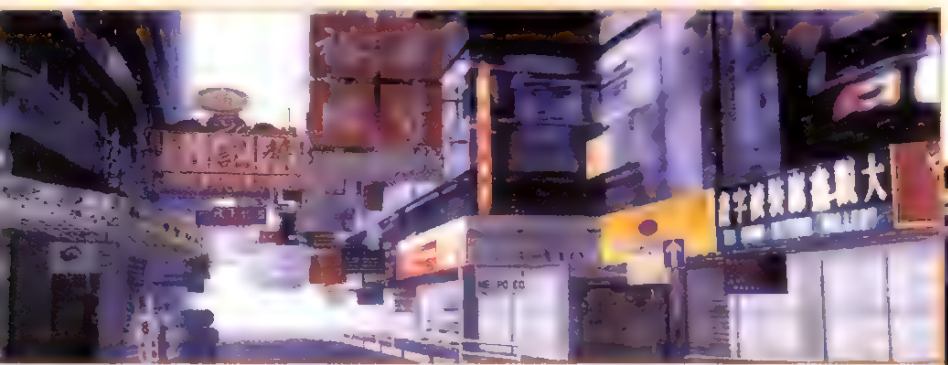
What we can say from looking at a video of the arcade version is that the game has undergone some subtle but significant improvements from the previous installment. First of all, the characters appear much larger; in the close-up views, they nearly fill the entire screen. This requires more processing power, of course, but the characters move even more fluidly than before, which is saying quite a lot. The motion-capture sessions have given the characters an unprecedented level of realism (which is not always the case with motion capture;

if not implemented properly, it can actually make animations worse).

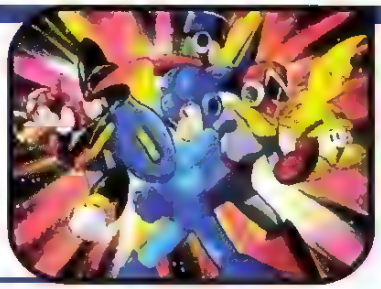
In addition, it appears that a few new types of moves have been added. For example, some characters now seem to perform low grabs and throws in addition to their regular arsenal of grapples. It has been said that every character will now be able to counter moves, something which Tekken 2 veterans will appreciate.

Paul, Nina, Yoshimitsu, Law, Lei and King have returned for the new version, and four new characters have been added to the opening Select Screen. These include Hwoarang, a kicking fighter reminiscent of Tekken 2's Sub-Boss Baek; Xiaoyo, whose fighting style resembles Nina's in terms of speed and reach; Jin, who is said to be the son of Jun and Kazuya and resembles both in fighting style; and a fourth new character who has yet to be named. We have yet to see a Boss or any Sub-Bosses, but it's a safe bet that the fighting hierarchy will resemble that of Tekken 2.

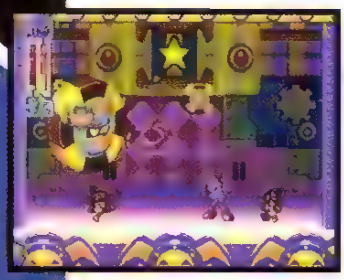
As of this writing, Namco has stated that the game is only about 30 percent finished. If this is the case, it is possible that the home version will contain even more characters than Tekken 2. One thing, at least, is certain: With its superior speed, enhanced graphics and improvements all around, Tekken 3 is definitely going to be the fighting game to beat. X

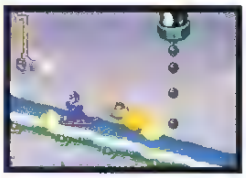


Mega Man 8



CAPCOM UNLEASHES ANOTHER "MEGA" HIT PLATFORMER



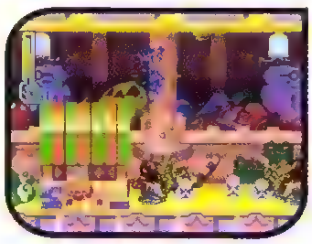


MM8 puts old-school gameplay into a state-of-the-art environment.

One of Capcom's most long lived and endearing characters, Mega Man, soon will be blasting his way onto the PlayStation.

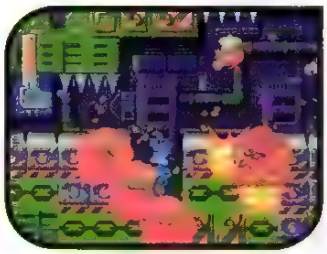
The 32-Bit revolution prompted many game developers to virtually abandon hand-drawn graphics in favor of flashier polygons or prerendered sprites, often at the expense of gameplay. Capcom is one of the few remaining companies with a genuine reverence for the classic, more cartoonish style of graphics, and they wisely chose to retain this look for the first 32 Bit installment of this timeless series.

Graphically, MM has never looked better. Mega Man 8's enemies are brightly colored and feature an astounding number of frames of animation. Even more impressive, there are sometimes as many as a dozen enemies on the screen at once, and there isn't a hint of slow-down, which plagued the SNES installments of the series. (Who said the PlayStation couldn't scroll?)



These visual enhancements would be for naught if Mega Man 8 offered nothing new in terms of gameplay, but this isn't the case. MM has a wide assortment of new weapons with which to battle the bad guys. Among these are a soccer ball-like weapon that can ricochet around the screen, a grappling device that can be used to swing from objects, and a vortex attack that can both damage enemies and propel Mega Man upward to those hard-to-reach areas.

Another innovation is Mega Man's ability to modify weapons by discovering hidden bolt icons. After collecting a sufficient number of bolts, he can visit Dr. Light's laboratory for some modifications. For instance, Mega Man's standard power up blast can be changed into a laser attack that cuts through enemies.

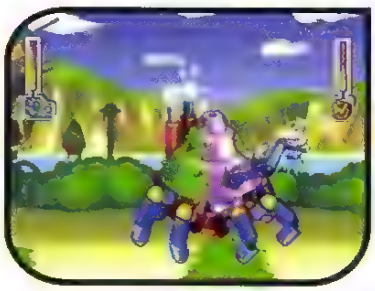


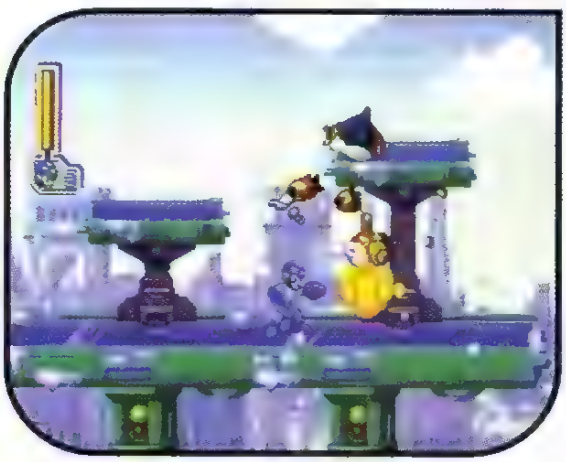
MM's trusty dog Rush also makes a few cameo appearances in the game. Rush's master occasionally jumps on his back for some challenging shooter levels!

Resident Evil helped make Capcom one of the comeback companies of 1996. Hopefully, quality games like Mega Man 8 will help them continue their winning ways.

GRAPHICALLY, MEGA MAN HAS NEVER LOOKED BETTER

A load of new power-ups will give Mega Man a number of new ways to plow through his enemies.





THEME
Action

OF PLAYERS
1

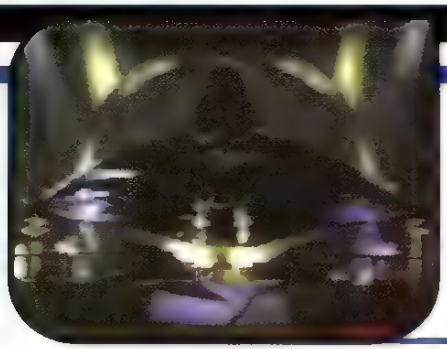
OF LEVELS
14

CHALLENGE
Variable

PUBLISHER
Capcom

FAST FACTS

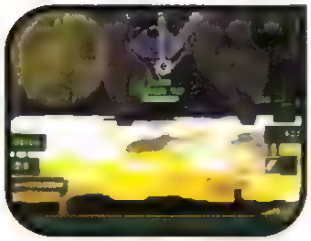
The Mega Man series has spanned 17 U.S. releases on a total of four different console systems.



ID4

INDEPENDENCE DAY: EARTH'S DAY OF RECKONING

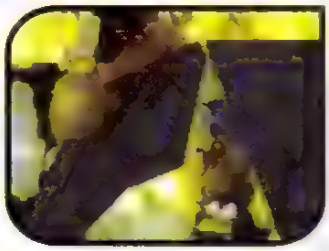
Gamers who have anxiously waited to "whup E.T.'s butt" on the PlayStation need wait no longer; Independence Day has arrived, and it's packed with all the excitement of its big-screen brother. ID4 gives players the chance to hop into the most advanced fighter planes U.S. tax dollars can buy and engage hostile alien forces in intense aerial combat.



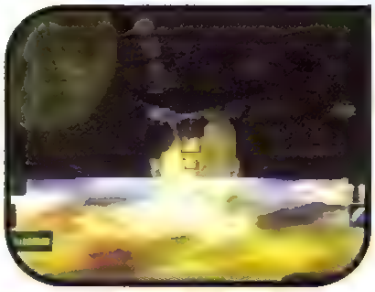
Darkened by the ominous shadows of the alien city destroyers, the skies over such metropolises as New York, Moscow, Paris and Washington will be swarming with enemy fighters, intent upon crushing Earth's scattered forces. Before annihilating each city destroyer, the player must perform a specific mission objective, unique to each level. In New York, the player must skillfully fly between skyscrapers and destroy numerous satellite uplinks the aliens are using for communications purposes. In Washington, the player must escort an enormous AWACS plane to safety. After performing each level's objective, the gamer must obliterate the city destroyer's shield generators and deliver the knock-out blow straight up the colossal vessel's primary weapon, just like that gin-soaked crop duster did in the movie.

Fortunately, players have numerous wingmen to assist them during each battle. Pay close attention to their radio chatter, which prompts you what to do next.

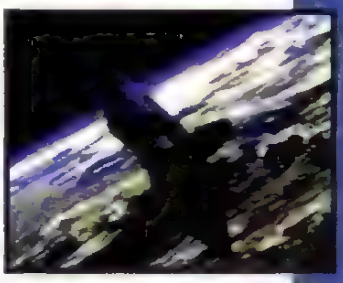
Each level is magnificently detailed and contains plenty of pick-ups, such as extra rockets, health and new fighters, for ace pilots to discover. Each of ID4's cities are highly detailed and contain all the famous landmarks you would expect to see. Additionally, there are warp conduits protruding beneath a few of the alien city destroyers that will transport the player to hidden levels, such as Cape Canaveral and the infamous Area 51.

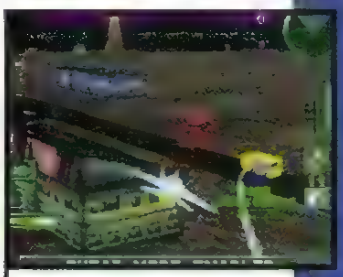


The best pilots will fly a commandeered alien fighter deep into the heart of the alien mothership. Fail in your mission, and the Earth will become a summer home for vacationing E.T.s. Succeed, and you will go down in history. (Note: Victory cigars not included).



ID4 will give players a chance to pilot one of a fleet of different fighters.





Whose side are you on, anyway?

THEME
Shooter

OF PLAYERS
1

OF LEVELS
13

CHALLENGE
Moderate

PUBLISHER
Fox Int.

FAST FACTS

Independence Day was the highest-grossing film of 1996.

ENGAGE HOSTILE ALIEN FORCES IN INTENSE AERIAL COMBAT

THE SPIDER THAT'S ALSO AN

EXTERMINATOR

Sentient

STEP INTO A SCI-FI NIGHTMARE

Psygnosis' next cool big PlayStation release, Sentient, will be something of a departure for the company, which is known primarily for their intense racing and action games. Sentient is a sci-fi adventure set on a space station orbiting an unstable sun. The player assumes the role of Garrit, a medic sent from Earth to investigate a mysterious outbreak of radiation sickness. Garrit arrives to find the station in the midst of near chaos; the captain has been murdered, and rival factions within the crew are grappling for control of the station, which is slowly heading for the sun. It is up to Garrit to save the station, to find the radiation source and to make first contact with an alien race.

The thing that sets Sentient apart from other sci-fi adventures is the game's highly developed artificial intelligence. The station is populated by 62 fully developed characters, who fall into four different personality types and job details: engineers, scientists, medics and security. Each character has his/her own personality, agenda and group allegiance. The characters go about their business whether or not Garrit is present to observe them and treat him no differently than any other crew member. Through his interaction with the other characters, which is conducted through true-to-life conversations, Garrit must win friends, acquire essential items and make important discoveries. For instance, the station's engineers continually are at odds with the scientists. Doing a favor for an engineer may forge a new friendship and lead to an important discovery, but it also may create enemies and cut off potential avenues of action for Garrit.

Sentient contains six major plots and random sub-plots that unfold based on the player's decisions. As mentioned previously, one plot requires Garrit to fight the radiation sickness. Later, Garrit must quell a mutiny, find the captain's assassin and discover the source of mysterious messages being sent to SUZIE, the station's computer.

Sentient offers an experience comparable to many of today's hottest sci-fi programs, such as *Star Trek* or *Babylon 5*; however, the player becomes more than a passive observer. He or she becomes an integral part of the action.

THEME Adventure

 # OF PLAYERS 1

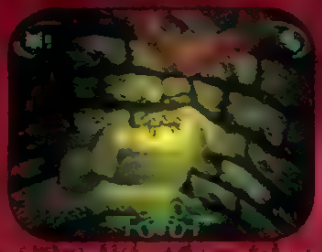
 # OF LEVELS N/A

CHALLENGE Difficult

PUBLISHER Psygnosis

EIGHT LEGS AND HEAVILY ARMED.

You're trapped in the body of a cyborg spider. Creeping down drain pipes. Crawling on ceilings. Wandering through



over 30 levels in six 3D worlds. You're picking up missile launchers, slashers and other deadly weapons as you

fight cyber rats, mantises and wasps. Needless to say, you're not an itsy bitsy spider.

SPIDER. THE VIDEO GAME.

www.bossgame.com

BMG INTERACTIVE BOSS

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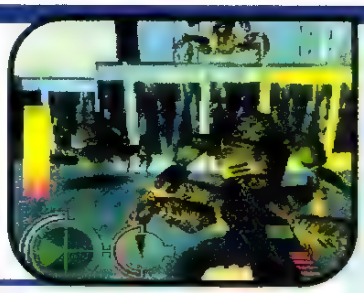
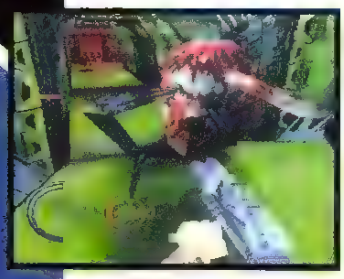
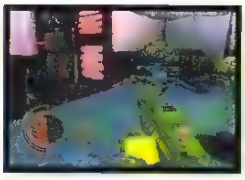
KIDS TO ADULTS K-A ESRB PlayStation

Codename: Tenka



PSYGNOSIS TAKES A SHOT AT DOOM CLONES

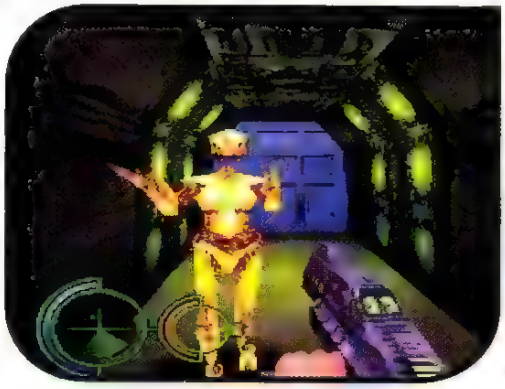




A morphing, talking sidearm will be your only ally.

They messed with his brain, and now he wants revenge. No, it wasn't high school that turned the protagonist of Codename: Tenka into a man bent on revenge; it was the unscrupulous experiments of Trojan, Inc., a shadowy company that specializes in cybernetic research in a bleak, *Blade Runner*-esque future.

After the PlayStation success of Doom, Dark Forces and Disruptor, it seems every development company is trying to jump on the first person shooter bandwagon. It seems European programming powerhouse, Psygnosis, is no exception; however, this particular company has a reputation for making genuine attempts to advance each genre of game it produces. Tenka looks like it will continue this proud tradition.



In Codename: Tenka, your character awakens in a heavily patrolled cybernetics laboratory after the experiment he "volunteered" for was inexplicably interrupted. His memory a tattered patchwork of images and voices, he sets out to find out his identity and the person responsible for his condition.

While the story isn't earth-shatteringly original, Tenka's graphics feature a novel twist; all of the enemies featured in the game are polygon-based. They also stalk, retreat and hide with a high degree of realism thanks to their well-developed artificial intelligence. (Are we nervous yet, Turok the Dinosaur Hunter?)

Your character has some novel abilities as yet unseen in other Doom-like clones. For instance, he can blast open air ducts and crawl through them as an alternate means of navigation. Not only does this add to the strategy, but it also produces a highly claustrophobic atmosphere that is just plain creepy.

Even your gun in Tenka is cool. Instead of finding new guns, you find attachments, such as laser sights and missile launchers, that sprout from the main body of the weapon when activated.

The gun even talks to let you know which mode has been activated!

If you're looking for a good first-person shooter but are unimpressed with the crop of stale PC ports that have flooded the PlayStation market, Codename: Tenka may be just the game for you. It has a lot to offer PlayStation gamers of all ages.

THEY MESSED WITH HIS BRAIN, AND NOW HE WANTS REVENGE

THEME
Action

OF PLAYERS
1

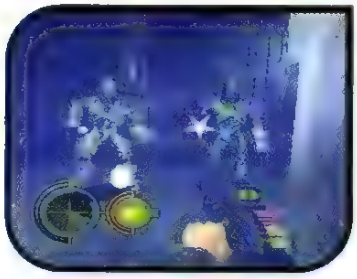
OF LEVELS
28

CHALLENGE
Variable

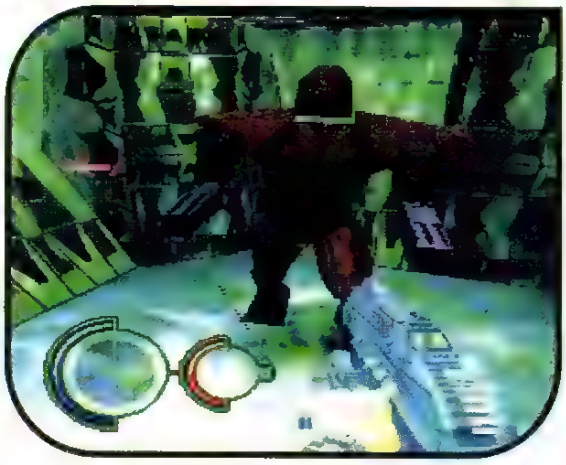
PUBLISHER
Psygnosis

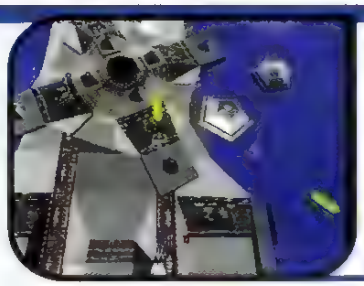
FAST FACTS

Codename: Tenka is the first 3-D shooter for the PlayStation to utilize polygonal enemies.



A load of new power-ups will give Mega Man a number of new ways to plow through his enemies.





Xevious 3D

AN OLD-SCHOOL SHOOTER WITH AN ADDED DIMENSION

When it first appeared in arcades during the early 1980s, Xevious was one of the most challenging and innovative shooters players had ever seen. Xevious gave gamers the ability both to shoot at airborne enemies and to drop bombs on ground-based targets, a convention still used in today's finest shooters. The game also featured invisible secret targets and outstanding graphics; one of Xevious' enemies, a rotating gray shield that was totally impervious to laser fire, was a primitive attempt at polygon-style graphics. Shooter fans will be thrilled to learn an updated version of this timeless classic, Xevious 3D, soon will be soaring onto the PlayStation. Early screens indicate the game is still a top-scrolling shooter, but Xevious 3D's graphics have gotten a major overhaul.

The enemies and terrain are completely comprised of polygons and the one Boss we've seen is a huge, multijointed monster! Shooter fans who can't wait for the updated version can check out an arcade-perfect version of the original Xevious on the excellent Namco Museum Volume 2.

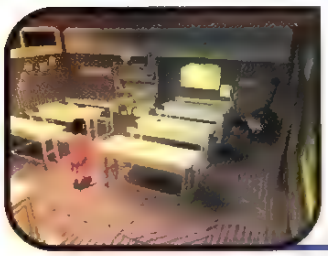
THEME
Shooter

OF PLAYERS
1

OF LEVELS
7

CHALLENGE
Moderate

PUBLISHER
Namco



The City of Lost Children

LOSE YOURSELF IN PSYGNOSIS' DARK FAIRY TALE

Psygnosis has teamed up with French filmmaker Marc Caro to produce a PlayStation adventure based on the critically acclaimed French film *The City of Lost Children* (created by Caro and Jean-Pierre Junet, creators of the award-winning *Delicatessen*). The game has been sparking comparisons to fellow French product Alone in the Dark, partly due to the dramatic camera angles used and partly due to the surreal, fanciful artwork throughout.

Billed as a "dark fairy tale," The City of Lost Children follows the adventures of a young girl named Miette and a circus strongman named One. It seems that an evil scientist named Krank has been kidnapping children in order to steal their dreams and prolong his own life. Krank makes a fatal error, however, when he nabs One's little brother Denree. Players take on the role of Miette as she journeys through a number of adventures in an attempt to rescue Denree and the other children who have fallen into Krank's clutches.

The game's developers used motion-capture technology to represent the game's many characters realistically. This realism, combined with the vivid scenery, should help to immerse gamers in this engrossing adventure. The use of advanced lighting and subtle shading should add to the experience.

Considering the storage ability of the CD format, it's surprising that PlayStation owners have not seen more extensive adventures in this classic PC style. Now that Psygnosis has taken the first step, hopefully other companies will follow.

THEME
Adventure

OF PLAYERS
1

OF LEVELS
N/A

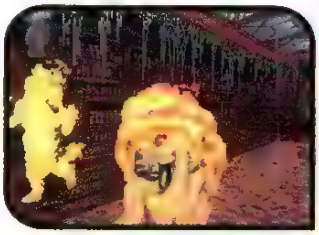
CHALLENGE
Moderate

PUBLISHER
Psygnosis

UNDER CONSTRUCTION

PREVIEWS OF GAMES CURRENTLY IN DEVELOPMENT

Blood



GT Interactive is hard at work on the latest in a respected line of first-person 3-D corridor shooters. Called Blood, this game looks to be one of the most grisly action titles yet. Like Duke Nukem 3-D, this game will be set in a realistic world—unlike the empty walls and pointless corridors of Doom and other 3-D shooters.

What distinguishes this game from the hordes of similar corridor games on the market is the imaginative array of weapons. The player starts out the game with a pitchfork, an interesting weapon to say the least. From there, the weapons can be upgraded to such unique items as a voodoo doll or a homemade flamethrower (aerosol can plus lighter equals crispy fried baddies).

In the first wave of 3-D shooters, motion was basically confined to a single plane. Although the character appeared to be moving up and down stairs and elevators, there was never a point in a level where the player could stand directly above another room or hallway. The most recent trend in corridor games has dismissed that, allowing the player full freedom of movement in three dimensions. Blood will implement a similar engine, creating the possibility of attack from all directions.

The enemies in Blood are expected to be a frightening mix of ghouls and demons as players walk streets populated with undead zombies and withered remnants of things that may once have been human. Although at this point the enemies are expected to be represented as sprites (rather than Quake's polygonal enemies), they will be presented in greater detail than the average shooter; players will be able to watch as blood spurts from their wounds or see them go up in a ball of flame when struck with the aerosol flamethrower or other flame-spouting weapons.

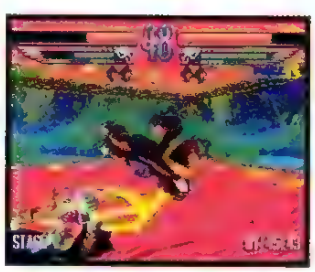
The enemies themselves are expected to be of greater than-average intelligence, as well. In Hexen, the most recent 3-D game from GT Interactive, the enemies were equipped with a formidable artificial intelligence that greatly improved the game. We can expect only improvements as this long-awaited title reaches the PlayStation.

Although it's obvious that the 3-D corridor genre has stagnated to a considerable degree, it is also clear that developers have begun to try for something new within the genre, and it appears that GT Interactive is no exception. Hopefully, when all is said and done, Blood will stand out as new and exciting.

 # OF PLAYERS
1
 # OF LEVELS
N/A
CHALLENGE
Variable
DEVELOPER
GT Int.

Heaven's Gate

The characters and backgrounds will be large and colorful.



Atlus Interactive, creators of such games as Revelations: Persona and Peak Performance, is taking on the fighting genre on the PlayStation with the upcoming release of Heaven's Gate.

This game appears to be a blend of some of the traits of the top fighting games thus far, with noticeable elements of Toshinden, Tekken and Tobal thrown into a new mix.

At this point, the game appears to require more strategy than speed, with players learning a number of different attack and defense tactics in order to succeed. The inclusion of ring barriers adds an additional variable into the formula. Some arenas will have edges that players can be thrown off for an easy (and cheap) win, but others will have barriers that can be used to block opponents into a corner.

It appears that the game will also incorporate a special attack meter that will increase over the course of the match, allowing the characters to unleash devastating amounts of damage on opponents.

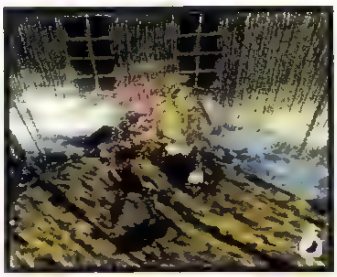
Seldom is seen a fighting game that isn't a sequel, remix or rehash of some other title. Heaven's Gate looks to be a new and interesting addition to the fighting genre.

 # OF PLAYERS
1 or 2
 # OF LEVELS
N/A
CHALLENGE
Variable
DEVELOPER
Atlus

Nightmare Creatures

Every once in a great while, a game comes along that redefines the rules of game design. These are the titles that set the standards. Resident Evil, Tekken 2, Tomb Raider...it is games like these that bring gaming to a new level. With a focus on quality gameplay and an incredible attention to detail, these titles do not have to be revolutionary to be influential; they must simply be good, solid games. That in itself is rare enough to force the public to pay attention.

From all we've seen, Nightmare Creatures appears to be such a game. Thrusting players into the role of a 19th-century monk, Ignatius (or his female counterpart, an American swordswoman named Shirley), this title flawlessly re-creates the feel of London in 1834. It seems that a secret society called the Brotherhood of Heccate has unleashed a number of supernatural creatures upon the world. Players must roam the streets of London and the surrounding countryside, confronting and exterminating hordes of evil beasts in an attempt to rid the world of the foul creatures once and for all.



Roam through London's docks and moors on a grisly beast hunt.

All locations are presented in true 3-D, with the camera following behind the main character much like in Tomb Raider. Unlike Tomb Raider, however, the combat here is almost entirely hand-to-hand: Ignatius is equipped with a long staff which he can use with a ruthless efficiency, and Shirley's sword can be used to dismember and decapitate her enemies with ease. Although certain distance weapons can be collected throughout the course of the game, players will be forced to rely primarily upon their wits and their most basic resources.

What sets this game apart from any other is the detail with which the environments are presented. The developers, France's Kalisto Entertainment, actually studied maps and blueprints representing the layout of 19th-century London while designing the levels in this game. The result is an incredibly lifelike environment, complete with dark alleys, looming cathedrals and terrifying graveyards. Level design, texture maps, light sourcing, sound effects and background music all combine to draw players into Nightmare Creatures' eerie and frighteningly realistic occult world.

The combat system itself offers a great deal of variety, with quick and intuitive controls that can yield unexpected (but quite satisfactory) results. Although as of this writing the controls are still being adjusted, it is clear that the developers will not rest until it is absolutely perfect. Players will have a choice of a number of different types of attacks, ranging from simple punch-and-kick combos to difficult jumping attacks.

Nightmare Creatures is a game that appears poised to move into the top spot of many PlayStation owners' wish lists. Expect to hear a great deal more about this title as it nears completion.

OF PLAYERS
1
OF LEVELS
15
CHALLENGE
VARIABLE
DEVELOPER
KALISTO

Tobal 2

When Tobal No. 1 became available to the public last year, it brought about accolades and criticisms due to its simplistic graphics and unique Quest Mode. Some reviewers hailed it for daring to be different; others slammed it in favor of more traditional fighting games. All agreed, however, that it was certainly something different within the often-tired fighting genre.

Now Square is hard at work on Tobal 2, and it looks to be an improvement over its predecessor in every way. Although the characters still appear to be represented as shaded polygons with little or no texture-mapping, the backgrounds are now extremely detailed, with vivid settings, varied lighting and interesting scenery. Hopefully, the increased complexity of the scenery will not have an adverse effect on the speed of the characters. If so, the developers might want to include an option to drop the level of detail in favor of speed (much like Toshinden 3).

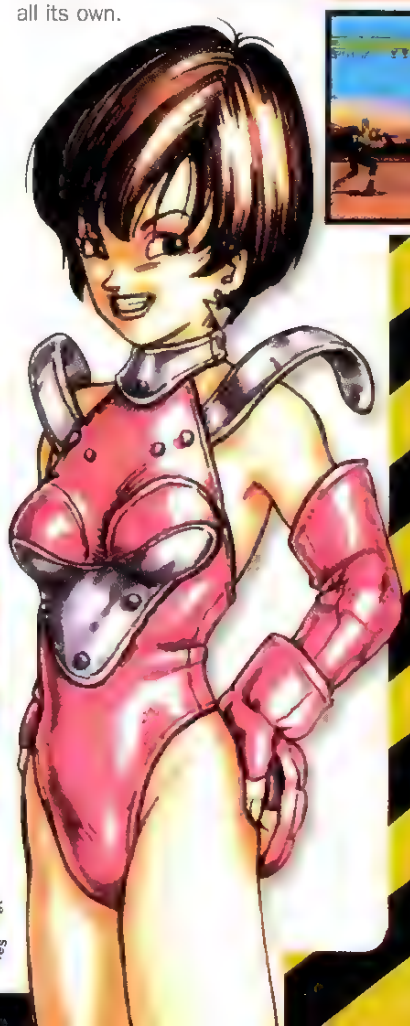
Perhaps the biggest change to the fighting engine is the introduction of projectile attacks. Like the fireballs from the Street Fighter series, each character is expected to have his (or her) own projectile attack. And speaking of characters, at least one new female fighter has been added. As of this writing, it is possible that several new fighters may be implemented, but nothing has been confirmed.

The Quest Mode is also undergoing some major revisions. In Tobal No. 1, the adventure was set in a dungeon and was basically a stringing-together of a number of battles, with the introduction of a few new enemies, some obstacles and health power-ups. Now, characters will journey outside through varied landscapes in true 3-D fashion. The adventure will take players through towns, into dungeons and across countrysides teeming with varied enemies, both human and otherwise. The game is also expected to incorporate some platform-style play to add to the experience.

When Tobal No. 1 was shipped, it included a demo disc of some of the other projects that Square was working on (a long awaited first look at Final Fantasy VII). So far, the company has not released any information on a possible pack-in with Tobal 2, but if it includes anything as huge as was in the previous version, the game is certain to raise some hype.

Although the game still has a ways to go to completion, gamers can be certain that Tobal 2 is going to be a fighting game with an identity all its own.

The projectile attacks add a new dimension to Tobal's unique fighting style.



* OF PLAYERS
1 OR 2
* OF LEVELS
N/A
CHALLENGE
VARIABLE
DEVELOPER
SQUARE

Toshinden 3

Not only was Toshinden, known as Battle Arena Toshinden in the U.S., the first truly 3-D fighter, but it also was the first weapons based fighter available for the PlayStation. Gamers were wowed by its beautifully shaded polygon characters and electrifying special attacks. Battle Arena Toshinden 2 introduced new characters, running attacks and improved combo attacks to the series but was somewhat overshadowed by the truly stellar Tekken 2. Additionally, Toshinden Kids, with its 'hyper deformed' versions of the Toshinden crew, was viewed as little more than a curiosity by many hardcore fighting fanatics and never made it to U.S. shores. Hopefully Toshinden 3 will help put the series back on track. Following the lead of Sega's Fighting Vipers, Takara has made the bold move of enclosing Toshinden's arenas in cages, adding all-new tactics, such as improved juggling, leaping wall attacks and wall recoveries to the mix.

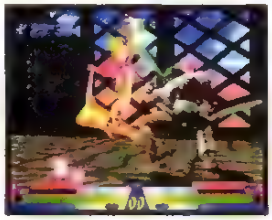
Fans of the series will be glad to learn that almost every character from the first installments of the series has returned for Toshinden 3 along with some brand new fighters. David is a trenchcoat wearing 15-year-old who brandishes both a chainsaw and a pistol. Nagisa is a mountain of a man who carries an equally impressive sidearm. Shizuku is a kimono-clad fighter who is as deadly as she is beautiful. Somewhat surprisingly, Fo Fai has been dropped from Toshinden 3 in favor of Bayhou, a bizarre monkey character with energy ball attacks remarkably similar to Fo's. These newcomers, in addition to the standard characters and Bosses from the two previous editions, raise the roster to an astounding 31 fighters!

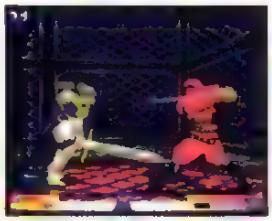
Furthermore, although most characters retain the ability to taunt the opponent, some characters execute a special action when the Select button is pressed. For example, Nagisa, whose primary weapon is a huge pistol, must reload his weapon, thereby giving the opponent an opening for an attack. David, on the other hand, packs a gun but does not normally use it unless the Select button is pressed.

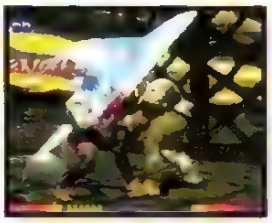
Besides the walled arenas, Toshinden 3's other major innovation is the ability to change the frame rate from 30 to 60 fps. Switching to 60 frames per second greatly speeds up the action, but the character's detailed texture maps had to be sacrificed in the process, giving the speed-up version a look highly reminiscent of Square's Tobal No. 1. This feature makes the game more thoroughly customizable, giving fighting veterans the speed of the less intricately illustrated fighting games, while allowing newcomers or those more interested in appearance the ability to improve the look or take the speed down a notch. Hopefully, other makers of fighting games will seize upon this innovative option and include it in their brawlers; the more options included in a game, the more players it will be likely to attract.

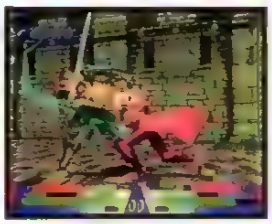
Toshinden 3 has already been released in Japan, where its innovations are turning more than a few heads. Playmates has already inked a deal that will bring it to American shores, as well. Fans of the previous games will thank them for it.

Toshinden 3 contains an intro even more revealing than the previous version.









OF PLAYERS
1 OR 2
OF LEVELS
N/A
CHALLENGE
VARIABLE
DEVELOPER
TAKARA

Dissecting SPIDER

by Gary Mollohan

The Anatomy of Boss' Bionic Arachnid

Two years ago, a small group of video game industry insiders, fed up with meddling producers and marketing-minded bureaucrats, founded their own development company, Boss Game Studios, on the outskirts of Seattle. Game fans at heart, the members of Boss wanted to make original titles that emphasized gameplay over flash or big licenses. Spider, Boss' first offering for the PlayStation, is such a game. We recently visited with five members of the Spider creative team to learn more about this innovative game.

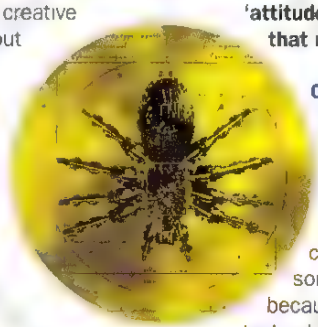
SPIDER MEN

Who's the Boss?

Colin Gordon
VP Product Development

Barry Leitch
Music/Sound Design

Rob Povey
Technical Director



P.S.X. **My first question is probably the most obvious; why did you want to make a game that starred a spider?**

Colin Gordon,
Vice President of Product Development

I guess where the idea came from originally was when Seth Mendelsohn and Rob Povey were working on The Lion King (for another software company). Rob was having a real hard time with the character, because it was long and thin, unlike the normal video game character, which is kind of tall and thin...and it had four legs. From a programmer's point of view it was tough, and Seth had made a crack about, 'You should be thankful you're not doing a character with more legs, like a spider," and that was...the germ of the idea. Whenever Seth and Rob came [to Boss Game Studios], they brought the idea with them. My suggestion was to make sure we did it in a 3-D environment.

Brian Johnson,
Lead Background Artist/ Level Design

It's just a character that hasn't been used very much in the gaming world... [Spiders are] not cute. [They're] kind of creepy-crawly. There is sort of a natural aversion in most people, which adds a bit of a disturbing tone to everything.

P.S.X. **Most platform games star a cartoonish mascot character with 'attitude.' Did you ever consider going that route with Spider?**

Colin: Like all companies you kind of have the game side of the company, and then there's the business guys. Well, the game guys, which is myself, Seth, Rob and the rest of the crew, didn't want to do a cutesy character. We wanted to do something that looked like a spider, because we felt [with the current level of] technology, we could pull it off. It *could* look like a spider and be really cool and different, and it wouldn't be a 'character' [with] a hat and boots. The business guys were like, 'No, it's gotta have a *character*. It's gotta have boots. Then we can *sell* it. So the concept guy put together probably the worst-looking cartoon spider that he could draw, just to make sure that nobody would like it.

P.S.X. **I heard you guys actually have a pet tarantula in your office. Did you study him to learn how he moves?**

Colin: He never moves (laughs). When he's really hungry, and I dump in some crickets, then he'll just jump on them. He doesn't cruise around his cage or anything like that. He just kind of hangs out in one spot....We

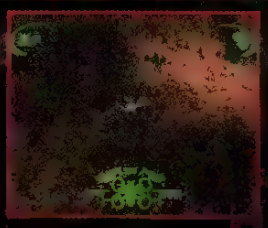
KILL THEM ALL!

Spider's protagonist created these cybernetic creatures before his consciousness was transferred into

Phase Bats
Phase bats have a payload of spherical bombs that bounce on flat surfaces. Use missiles to eliminate these pests.

Black Widows
These eight-legged menaces aren't very bright, but like Spider, they have the ability to climb on all surfaces.

Flies
These pests first pass by in the foreground, then attack from behind. It's best to run from these attackers.



Grasshoppers
Jiminy Cricket they're not. Learn the hopping patterns of these pests and run beneath them or use missiles.

Rats
These enemies spit green projectiles at Spider. Use the electro attack to dispatch them with one shot.

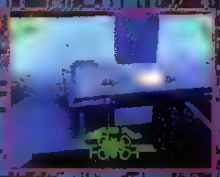
FIREPOWER!

Boomerang
Boomerangs are the only projectiles with unlimited supply. Plus, they do damage on the return flight.

Shield
Use this glowing sphere to traverse dangerous surfaces. Be warned. It disappears without warning.

Electrocutor
This weapon zaps enemies with a bolt of electricity. It is particularly effective against rats.

Flame
And you thought bugs hated magnifying glasses! The flame is even better, but it has a limited range.



Mines
Mines come in two flavors: standard, which are stationary, and mecha-which travel toward enemies.

Missiles
Missiles lock onto enemies and are particularly effective against airborne targets. Lock and Load!

Toxic Cloud
This device shoots a toxic cloud at enemies. It takes awhile to dissipate and does continuous damage.

Smartbomb
The smartbomb devastates everything in its path. Use these wisely, because they are very scarce.

bought a couple of Time/Life videos, and the guys sat and watched those to try to figure it out. It was tough doing the eight legs, because they don't move like you would expect. I have no idea how spiders actually figure out how they're supposed to walk, but they're pretty good at it.

***P.S.X.* Did you consider using motion capture?**

Colin: We did some experiments with a motion-capture system, which was a puppeteer system, where we actually built this metallic model spider with joints and everything, and we moved it around and captured the movement. But we just couldn't get it to work in our format, and time was ticking.

Dan Chang, Lead Programmer

[People] have certain preconceptions how a spider walks. If you don't [achieve] that, somebody's not going to look at it and say, 'That doesn't look like a spider.' Whereas, if you animate a human form and get that wrong, somebody will know right away, because the human eye is really well trained to detect things wrong with human animation. But it's not that well keyed to how a spider walks.

***P.S.X.* Getting to the game itself, Spider *does* allow a great deal of freedom of movement and decision making on the player's part, but the levels basically are linear in design. Did you ever consider doing a game where the player could go anywhere, like Tomb Raider?**

Colin: Yeah, we had thought about that. [Non-linear levels] sounded great in concept...but then we thought, 'what happens if the player comes back down on the floor at a different point, or what happens if he wants to go around a corner? What do we do?' Can you imagine Tomb Raider if you could walk over all the walls? You couldn't stop the player from [going] anywhere.

Rob Povey, Technical Director

Just consider a very, very small environment. Consider a table with a floor. If you have a spider in a free-form environment like that, you can go all over the top of the table, all underneath the table, up and down the legs, on the floor, so there is almost no way to restrict the movement.

***P.S.X.* After you decided how the levels would be structured, how did you decide upon a floating camera perspective? Why didn't you utilize camera 'cuts?'**

Colin: We play[ed] games like Alone in the Dark...where the camera shifted from point to point. We didn't want to do that. We wanted to keep a continuous camera movement, so that it would never jar. You would never wonder, 'Oh, now I'm over here, and now I'm here. Which way do I push?' It would always flow. The spider lent itself to that, as well, because it would curve around edges and move around stuff naturally. It seemed ideal.

Dan: The problem as we saw it was to set it up so the camera would never get into a stupid position, where it would be looking off into the world without showing the player. That would be a problem. Another problem we were trying to avoid [was] putting the camera somewhere [that] would show parts of the world that hadn't been populated in. So one of the things we wanted to do was design a system where you could always see the [spider] at all times, and you could control it at all times.

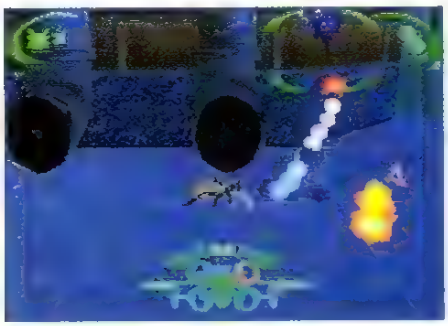
Taking Platform Games into the Third Dimension

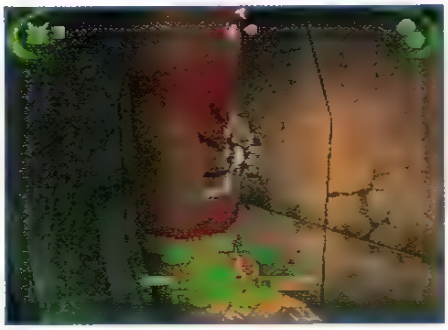
***P.S.X.* Platform games were one of the mainstays of 2-D gaming. What was it like taking the genre into a 3-D environment?**

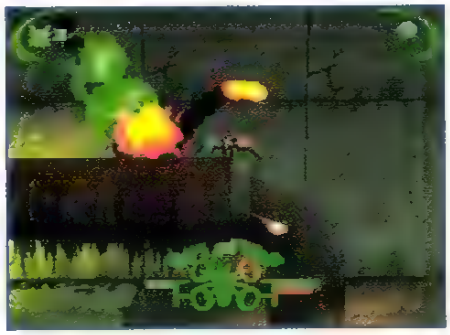
Rob: You look at the 3-D platform games out, [and] there are no good ones. They all fail one way or another. I mean, Mario...give it its credit. It's by far the best attempt, but it's far from perfect. What we set out to do was to try to take 2-D game mechanics and

put them in a 3-D world, so the player wouldn't feel lost. And just have something which looked visually very interesting, because 3-D does give us the option to have a totally different style of animation [and] a lot of different viewpoints that allowed us to really exploit the fact that a spider can walk up walls and underneath things, which we couldn't really do in a 2-D environment

Brian: Working in 3-D, it's harder to 'tie.' There are certain tricks that an artist can do with 2-D to fake perspective or do things that appear to be real, but in real life could never happen. In a 3-D package, you are forced by the camera to tell the truth a little more. The camera will go through things if you don't position things properly, and it's a little harder to get good composition on the screen.







***P.S.X.* Given all the new 32- and 64-Bit systems developers now have to work with, do you feel that game companies are overly enchanted with polygons and 3-D environments, often at the expense of gameplay?**

Colin: You know, I think that will happen for a while much like some of the early SNES games. Not necessarily Nintendo, themselves, but other people, when they started putting out their Mode 7 games...they just went for flash. They were pretty light, the games themselves, and they really didn't sell well. People caught on quickly. I think the same thing will happen here. It's still gotta be a game. It's gotta be fun. It's gotta be enjoyable to play. I mean, that's what you do. You don't just watch it; you gotta play it.

***P.S.X.* If I am a gamer who bought a PlayStation to experience new genres of games, why would I want to go back to playing a platform title like Spider?**

Colin: If you're a flight-sim buff that's bought a PlayStation to play flight-sim games, then, no, you're not going to buy Spider....Crash [Bandicoot] is kind of fun, but there's a lot of repitit[ion]. With Spider, there is a lot of freshness in each level. One of the things we did was to give the player a lot of variety and a lot of cool graphics. People like that kind of reward....If you like platform games at all, then Spider will appeal to you.

***P.S.X.* Considering the huge number of platform games that have already been made, did you try to avoid or include any particular conventions of the genre?**

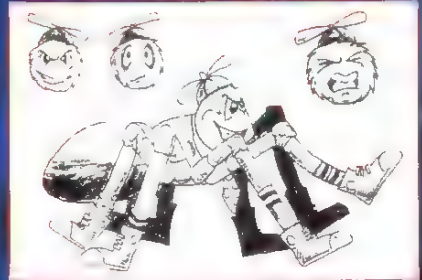
Rob: My opinion in design is by all means look at what everybody else is doing, but if you are going to do something the same as it's been done before, make sure you do it better. I'm not opposed to borrowing ideas where they make sense, but I don't think we set out to borrow specific ideas or to avoid borrowing specific ideas. I mean, to me...the game is about 'feel'; if it doesn't feel right, then it doesn't really matter how your levels are laid out. It has to feel good when you move around. Beyond that, it comes down to level layout, placement and planning.

***P.S.X.* Did you have any differences of opinion regarding the spider's abilities?**

Colin: We had a pretty heated debate for quite a while over the use of the web. One [camp] wanted the ability to shoot the web as in Bionic Commando (for the NES)....Another camp wanted the web the way it turned out. You couldn't shoot it, but you could hang from it, and you could swing, and you could use it to get to somewhere you couldn't get to before. The third group didn't want it all. The problem with the first [camp's argument] was from a mechanics point of view. Because you can kind of go anywhere, it's going to be really hard to set a path for the player, actually to make him jump over hazards as opposed to just skipping everything, which would be disastrous. If you could just skip along the ceiling avoiding everything, then it becomes less of a game. The third

SAY IT AIN'T SO!

Spider might have been another platform mascot with 'attitude,' if unnamed marketing personnel had had their way. Fortunately, one of Boss' concept artists had a stroke of genius. He produced this horribly bad character sketch to convince the powers-that-be to allow the Spider team to make a game starring a realistic spider.



option of not having any web at all: Well, no, you need to have a web. It's a spider. People would expect [the] web. Much like they'd expect it to walk around stuff.

Developing for the PlayStation

P.S.X. **After your experiences making Spider, do you feel the PlayStation is an easy platform to develop for?**

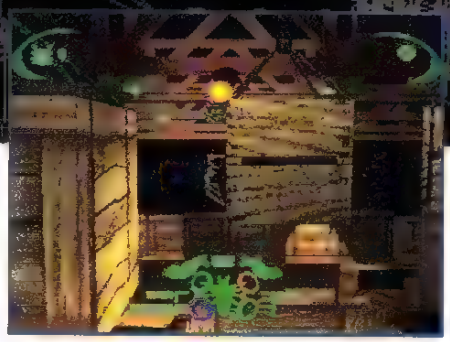
Dan: The PlayStation is a very, very nice platform to develop for...it's by far, of all the console systems I've worked on, the easiest one to program. [Sony] did a really nice job with the libraries that they provide. They really make the programming task a lot easier.

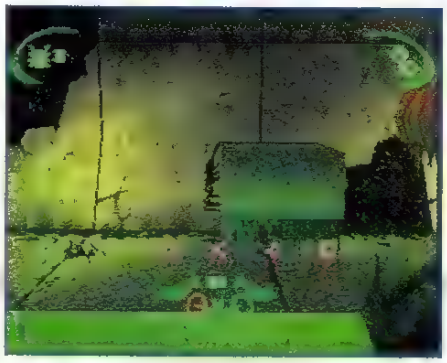
Brian: I'm really fond of the lights. The lighting effects are really nice. It does nice transparency effects. There are all kinds of layering of transparencies you can do to make explosions look nice and make dark, black smoke look real nice, too.

P.S.X. **How about the audio?**

Barry Leitch, Music/Sound Design

The PlayStation is probably my favorite machine....[It's] powerful enough to do all the programming things that the programmers want to do without having to access the CD a lot, which lets me spool the audio from the CD, so [the game] can have very high-quality music. Whereas something like the Nintendo 64, you have to program it as chip music, so you're very limited by the hardware. I [think] that the Spider music as chip music...wouldn't sound half as good. The PlayStation development kit also has its own special compression utilities, which allow you to reduce the size of the audio and then allow you to play it back as a compressed format without losing too much quality. It's very good on the PlayStation. Not quite as good on the (Sega) Saturn and bloody awful on the Nintendo 64 (laughs).





P.S.X. **Was it difficult coming up with spider sounds for the game? What does a real spider sound like, anyway?**

Barry: There's one kind of spider that makes bird sounds. It sounds more like a bird than a spider. So I used some of those sounds, and then I took some [actual] bird sounds and played them backward and messed with the pitch and stuff, so they sounded almost spidery. There's also some cybernetic sounds in there, kind of industrial sounds.

P.S.X. **Spider's story line is very futuristic. Did you try to reflect that in the music?**

Barry: We tried to make the music sound [like] something you would hear in the time frame that the game is set in. We also tried to keep pieces themed so people would relate to the backgrounds. So the factory levels are kind of hard, heavy rock tunes; whereas the first level, the laboratory, is more cyber-sounding.

Boss on the Future:

P.S.X. **I've noticed that most futuristic video games have a very pessimistic view of the future, technology and corporations. Spider is no exception. Do you, personally, hold these opinions?**

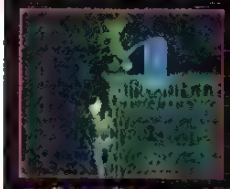
Colin: I would like to say no, but...I can't see anybody ever competing with AT&T, Microsoft or Intel. Maybe if there is a whole brand-new technology. Thirty or 40 years ago there were no computers, and Intel came out of nothing. So in 30 years' time, is there going to be another technology that nobody knows about today? Maybe. That's the only thing that is going to break the cycle.

Rob: I think one of the things we wanted to go for originally in [Spider] was a grim and gritty realistic look for the whole product, and I think that probably carried over into the intro and the other FMV sequences. Do I particularly hold that view? I'm not sure. I never look more than about five minutes ahead (laughs).

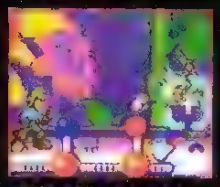
P.S.X. **Speaking of full-motion video, Spider's**

LOOK FAMILIAR?

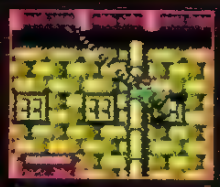
Spider borrows play mechanics from many past hits.



Wall Crawling
Like Gex, the star of Crystal Dynamics' 3-D platform game, Spider has the ability to climb walls and to hang from ceilings. Thankfully, unlike Gex, Spider does not feature the voice "talents" of Dana Gould.

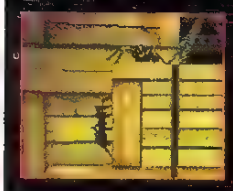


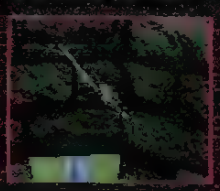
Collectible Weapons
Mega Man, Capcom's ageless action hero, collected the weapons of defeated Bosses and added them to his arsenal. Spider can find up to four cybernetic attachments and switch between them on-the-fly.

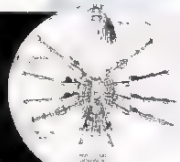


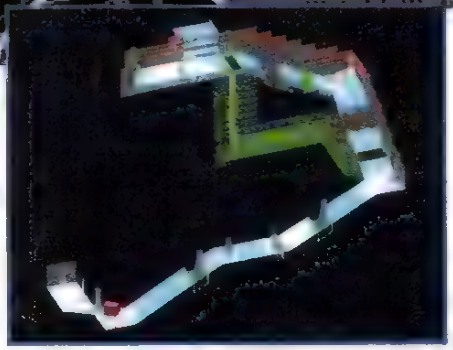
Swinging
Old-school gamers may recall another Capcom platform hero, Bionic Commando, who could swing with his bionic arm. Spider also has the ability to swing, but he cannot shoot his web outward in quite the same manner.

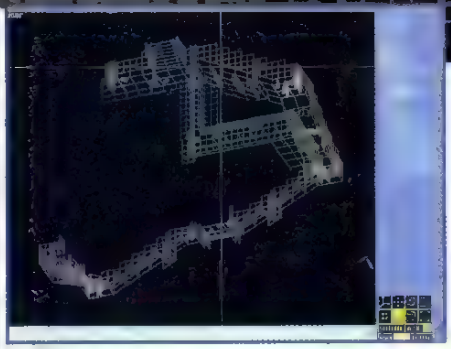
Floating Camera
The most recent platform game that really shook things up was Pandemonium! The game featured a floating camera that followed the hero. Spider also has a floating camera that really exploits the game's 3-D levels.

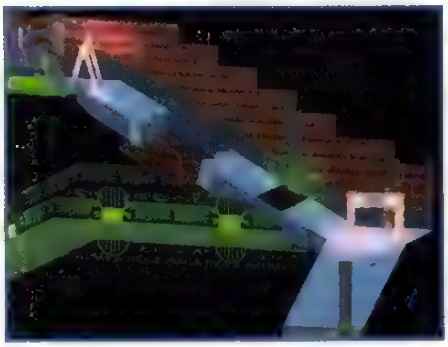


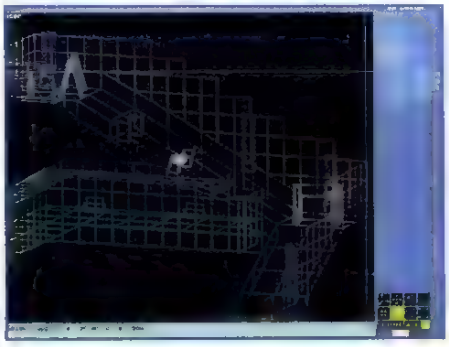








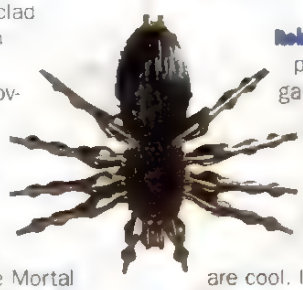




The Spider creative team members were particularly excited about the opportunity to put their character in real-life environments. Unlike 2-D platform games, Spider's levels had to occupy three dimensions.

cut-scenes are fairly violent. As video games become more realistic, do you feel game developers have an obligation to exercise more restraint or self-censorship?

Colin: I don't think people will. I th nk that we w ll see more scantily clad women...bearing bigger guns in games, before we see less. It's what sells. Ho lywood discovered that a long t me ago.



Rob: I think everybody has an obligation to some extent. I'm not a fan of any sort of censorship. That's not to say that if I were doing a game like Mortal Kombat, I wouldn t have violence in t. I would, because I think that s what the game is about. On the other hand, I wouldn't put violence that doesn't add to gameplay in a product. I think that our rating system, which is an indicator of the amount of violent content, is a good thing, because parents are buying for kids; however, different people are offended by different things, and you can never have a ratings system that s ever going to protect everybody. I think that in an ideal world the industry [would be] self-regulating, but I think in a realistic world, you probably are going to end up with some legislation along the line, because somebody is going to try to push it too far.

Colin: It's a d fferent character. [Spider] has some mechanics [players] haven't seen before or certainly haven't seen all in the same product. The control seems natural; you don't have to fight it, un ike a lot of the other 3-D platform games that are out there.

Rob: I think the primary selling point is that [Spider] is a fun game to play....It's a different sort of exploratory game, just simply because you can walk around the sides of platforms and underneath platforms. I think the 3-D stuff is cool. I think the paths are cool. I'm just really happy with how the game turned out. I always said that if I ever [made] a game I was happy with I'd quit, but this one I'm probably more happy with than anything e se I've ever worked on.

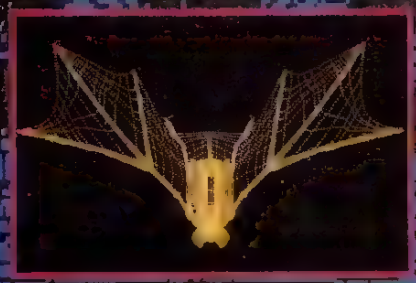
Thankfully for PlayStation owners everywhere, neither Rob nor any other members of the Spider design team currently have any plans to leave the ndustry. Boss Game Studios current y is hard at work on numerous titles for the PlayStation, ncluding an action/adventure game tentatively titled Kill Team and an original RPG, as well as several titles for other gaming platforms and the PC. PlayStation gamers definitely should keep an eye on this rising design studio We at *P.S.X.* certainly will.

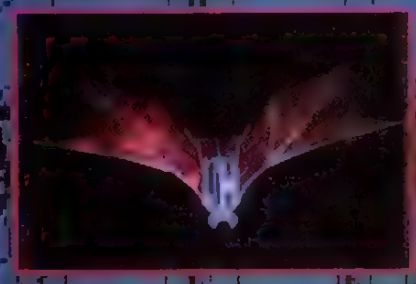
Why Play Spider?

P.S.X. **Now that Spider is finished and you have a little distance from the project, what sets Spider apart from other games?**

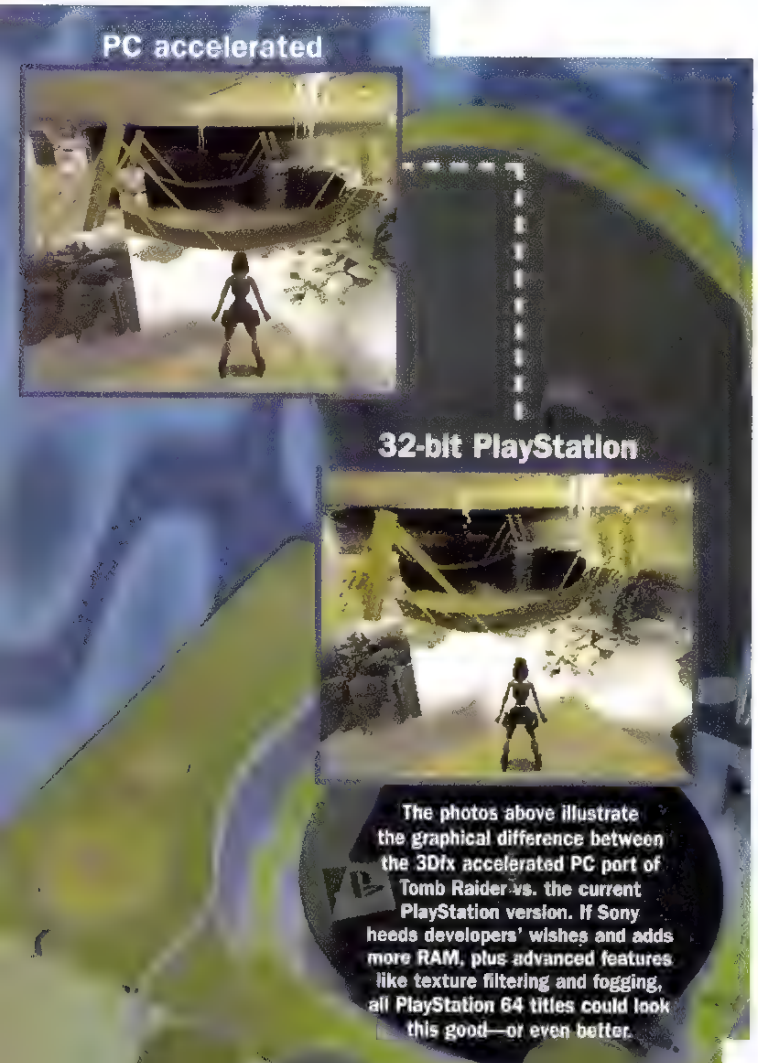
DRAWING BOARD

All of the characters in Spider were created from highly complex wire-frame models. After the wireframes were established, they were manipulated to produce all of the necessary frames of animation. The final step is to apply colorful texture maps to the characters to really bring them to life.





Pondering the PlayStation 64



The photos above illustrate the graphical difference between the 3Dfx accelerated PC port of Tomb Raider vs. the current PlayStation version. If Sony heeds developers' wishes and adds more RAM, plus advanced features like texture filtering and fogging, all PlayStation 64 titles could look this good—or even better.

Some of the industry's top game developers reveal what they want—or expect to see—in Sony's eagerly anticipated 64-Bit box; and when gamemakers talk, Sony's got to listen...

The best way to handle discussion of a 64-Bit PlayStation is to compare it to a California earth quake. Sony has made no secret that the "Big One" is coming. What remains a mystery is when it'll hit, and how powerful the "Big One" will truly be.

P.S.X. has heard the occasional rumbling about Sony's top-secret development project. However, as long as the 32-Bit PlayStation continues to shake up the video game market, Sony has no reason to even discuss a sequel at this point in time.

But don't mistake reticence for inactivity: Sony is certainly hard at work engineering 64-Bit PS systems for game development. But until those systems reach the hands of developers, predicting when and where the "Big One" will strike remains an inexact science at best.

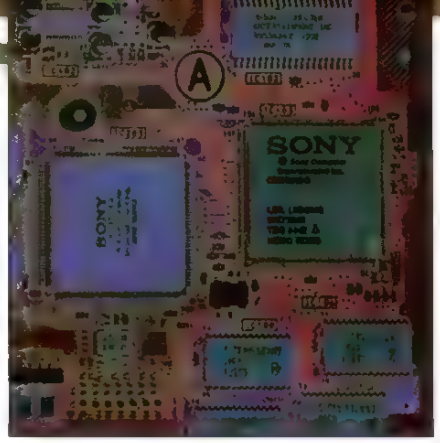
In the meantime, the best source for gauging the "Big One's" shock on the Richter scale comes from the experts. In the case of the PS64, those experts are undoubtedly current PS developers. After all, who knows the potential a 64-Bit machine could have better than the developers who have already pushed the 32-Bit envelope?

"I think it is an excellent idea to get opinions from game developers," said John Botti, president of Black Ops Entertainment, which created Black Dawn. "After all, we're the ones constantly pushing the systems to their limits, and hoping for certain changes that would make games even more immersive and fun."

(A quick note: For clarity, the remainder of this story refers to Sony's 64-Bit system as the PS64—a shortened version of PlayStation 64. However, Sony has not actually given the system a name since the console technically doesn't exist yet.)

By Nelson Taruc and Todd Mowatt

The Ultimate Guide for PlayStation Games 64



As far as recent systems go, initial video game development is—at its roots—a pain in the ass. Every time a new system comes out, developers must basically start from scratch to learn the machine's ins and outs.

The PS has the potential to be the first machine to buck that trend. When the machine first came out, Sony said its development tools ensured that current games could be compatible with a PS64.

The prevailing rumor around the industry is that the PS64 will be fully backward compatible—not just with games, but with peripherals such as the memory card and controllers as well. Whether that rumor is true remains to be seen; still, many developers say backward compatibility makes sense for the PS64.

"Yes, it can be done," noted David Perry, president of Shiny Entertainment, which is currently making Wild 9's for the PS. "It would be a *huge* mistake not to" make it compatible, he added. "It just enables you to beat the dust off old games whenever your heart desires."

Well, if it can be done, how? "It's simple: They just have to *add*, they cannot take away anything," Perry said. "They can add more RAM, more screen modes, more features" and so forth.

any material technical changes and maintain compatibility with current PS titles."

Plus, Gilmore adds, the addition of a PS emulator within the PS64 won't make sense—or cents—for Sony. "Clearly, if you already own a library of PS games, you would be able to play them on your new system—not much of an advantage given that if you own a PS game, chances are that you also own a PS," he said.

However, a built-in PS system in the PS64 could yield some advantages, according to Activision Studios producer John Lafleur, who is currently working on Pitfall 3D for the PS. Since the PS64 will likely offer a faster CD-ROM and processors, some PS games might possibly be

"IT WOULD BE A HUGE MISTAKE NOT TO"

MAKE THE PS64 **COMPATIBLE** WITH THE PS. "IT JUST ENABLES YOU TO **BEAT** THE DUST OFF **OLD GAMES** WHENEVER YOUR HEART **DESIRES.**" — DAVID PERRY

As far as RAM goes, expansion of the main RAM is already a built-in option within the current PS. "It is possible to have an eight-megabyte PlayStation now," said Botti. Development systems support up to 8 MB, but only 2 MB are really needed because that's all the standard PS uses.

Another hurdle to backward compatibility, video RAM expansion, could be overcome if Sony preserved the various ratios needed to store a particular texture in VRAM—to do that, Sony would need only to double or triple the amount of VRAM in the PS (currently 1 MB).

Not all developers share optimism on backward compatibility. Dreamworks Interactive's Matt Brown and Patrick Gilmore, both currently working on Jurassic Park: The Lost World for the PS, see a backward-compatible PS64 as an affair too costly for Sony to handle.

"It is extremely unlikely that Sony's new machine will be backward compatible with the existing system," Gilmore said. "It would be impossible to make

able to run "at better speeds"—or at least run with reduced load times, he said.

Sharing the PS-within-the-PS64 theory was Core Design's Paul Douglas, the lead programmer for the PS version of Tomb Raider. "They can probably fit" a PS emulator on a chip that uses the PS64's RAM, Douglas said. The real cost for such a chip could be as low as $5.

It seems more and more ideal for Sony to do so for several reasons. First off, a backward-compatible PS would give Sony a marketing edge over its competitors. The Nintendo 64 offers no link to its 16-Bit library; neither does the Sega Saturn.

"For the game player who doesn't already own a PS, they would be buying a [64-Bit] system that by then would probably have about 1,000 games available for it," envisioned Tommy Tallarico, a well-respected video game music composer.

Most importantly, a fully backward-compatible PS64 means developers wouldn't start from scratch to learn a new system, work in a new development environment

CURRENT 32-BIT PS SPECIFICATIONS

MAIN CPU: 32-Bit RISC (R3000A)

INSTRUCTION CACHE: 4 KB
DATA CACHE: 1 KB
CPU CLOCK FREQUENCY: 33MHz

RAM
2 MB (Main)
1 MB (Video RAM)
.5 MB (Audio RAM)

GRAPHIC PROCESSOR (GPU)
Sprite rendering performance
Max: 4,000 per 1/60 second
Rotation/scaling
Deformation possible
w/all sprites displayed
Full-color display
Maximum 16.7 million colors
Resolution 256 x 224 up to 640 x 480 dots
Effects:
360,000 flat, shaded polygons/second
180,000 texture-mapped,
Gouraud shaded polygons/second

GEOMETRY ENGINE (GTE)
Vertex processing speed: 4.5 million per second
(1.5 million polygons per second in the case of flat shading)

PCM AUDIO
Simultaneous sound sources
Max. 24 channels
Sample rate: Max. 44.1 KHz, 16 bits
Playback quantization
Built-in digital effects
e.g., reverb, envelope

Data decompression engine (MDEC) JPEG
Directly connected to CPU bus
Supporting format
Video playback function:
Full screen, full color
Playback time: 35 minutes
from one CD-ROM disc

DATA SAVING METHOD: Memory card

Video, audio out:
Composite video, S-Video, RGB output, stereo audio, 5V power for external RF converter

(Source: Sony Computer Entertainment)

PS64 BACKWARD COMPATIBILITY
One Developer's Perspective

To this point, most of the talk regarding backward compatibility for the PS64 revolves around what Sony has to do to pull off this feat. The flip side to that argument, of course, is what can't Sony do with the PS64?

Black Ops' John Botti offered this list of PS64 no-nos—presumably, if Sony broke any of these "rules," it would endanger full PS compatibility:

1. Add to, but don't modify, the current PS RAM architecture. Keep the main RAM contiguous. Don't monkey with the PS video RAM's layout; just add more of it.

2. Don't change the "primitives' formats" in the Graphics Processing Unit (GPU). Botti describes this in layman's terms: "The data representation of a 'flat-shaded textured triangle'" in the current PS must be identical to its data equivalent in the PS64. If you're still lost, here's the *Sesame Street* explanation: If the PS draws Bert using a pineapple shape, the PS64 must use that same pineapple shape to draw Bert as well.

3. Keep C as the programming language (but still allow programmers to optimize machine-level code to boost a game's performance).

and rebuild in-house graphics tools.

The PS is already highly regarded as one of the most manageable systems to work with, according to most developers. "It is the best," Botti contended. "Having coded games on the Sega Genesis, Super Nintendo, TurboGraphix CD, Sega CD and CD-i systems, writing games for the PS is like driving a Mercedes-Benz SL-500 as opposed to driving a $500, 20-year-old bucket-of-bolts."

With a backward-compatible PS64, "programmers and artists could leverage off the first four years of PS development, and catapult themselves into the stratosphere of game development" by focusing "more on content, much like the film industry does," he said.

This story could go on and on debating the pros and cons about backward compatibility, but that's not the bacon that'll make the PS64 sizzle. "Consumers are not going to buy a PS64 to play old PS games," said Douglas (the obvious exception being Tomb Raider, he quickly added). "They want to play new games—Tekken 64 or whatever."

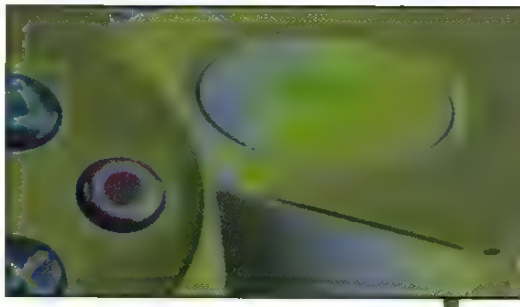
Which begs the $64,000 question: What do PS coders hope to see in the PS64 to effectively make a leap into 64-Bit game development?

To a man, those interviewed wanted mo' RAM, mo' RAM, mo' RAM. It's a virtual certainty the PS64 will have more main RAM and VRAM, but how much can Sony afford? Most developers said a boost from 2 MB of main RAM in the PS to 8 MB sounded like the fairest figure for the PS64.

As for the more expensive video RAM, used to store textures and animation, developers stuck to a range between 2-4 MB. The PS currently has 1 MB of VRAM.

Botti estimated that the proposed increases in RAM and VRAM, if implemented in the PS64, would boost the amount of on-screen textured polygons by up to 500 percent. "I don't know what Sony has in store for this, but in 3-D games, 'polygon count' is the name of the game," said Botti. "The PS can handle roughly 2,000 texture-mapped polygons per frame [per 60th of a second], but it would be excellent if the PS64 could crunch say, 10,000 per frame."

Inevitably, comparisons of the PS64 will



be made to the Nintendo 64 when the machine's specs are publicly revealed by Sony. So what does the N64 have that the PS64 could benefit from?

For one thing, the N64 uses Z-buffer. The PS uses Z-sort. In a nutshell, both methods keep track of the "front to back" order of polygons drawn on screen, so hidden polygons aren't needlessly drawn and partially obscured polygons are clipped appropriately. A Z-buffer does this task more effectively than a Z-sort, resulting in lower polygon dropout and flicker. "I'm not quite sure how realistic it is to have a new PS that supports Z-buffer and

contd. on page 68

What's In a Name?

When Sony officials first crafted the name PlayStation, they sought to play off the word "workstation." Like most workstations, the PS delivers heavy-duty processing power. However, the PS uses that power for games and entertainment, rather than for serious work.

The success that the PS name has generated for the system poses an interesting problem: What do you name Sony's 64-Bit system?

"I would simply call it 'PlayStation II,' so that the consumer could identify with the already popular PlayStation products," Black Ops' John Botti said.

"The name has to have PlayStation in it somewhere," agreed Core Design's Paul Douglas, who offered the names PlayStation 2 or PlayStation Plus.

Another name—PlayStation 64—seemed an obvious choice for Activision Studio's John Lafleur. "Certainly it does throw the gauntlet down," he observed. "Nintendo's coming out with the Nintendo 64, then [Sony] comes out with the PlayStation 64; they're obviously looking for some competition."

However, Botti had reservations about putting "64" or "128" after the PlayStation name. "The number can be misleading," he said. "[That number] is usually a marketing hook to distinguish one company's machine from others, such as the TurboGraphix 16, Amiga 32, Commodore 64—what do those numbers really mean anyway?"

Shiny's David Perry took an exotic route with the name game, suggesting "Sony ArcadeStation or some weird Japanese name because it would be fun watching the American public attempt to pronounce it correctly."

As expected, a few developers' suggestions bordered on the fanciful. Video game music guru Tommy Tallarico offered, "The Galaxy, 'cause it's probably going to be the best game system in the whole galaxy! Or how about Zeus, 'cause it will be the god of all machines!"

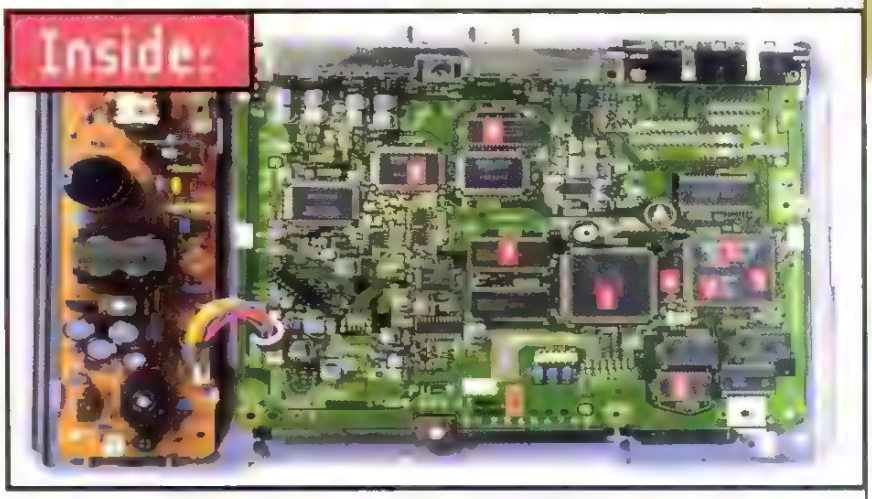
Anyway, the informal *P.S.X.* office poll for a name resulted in a tie between PlayStation Plus and PlayStation 64. Runners-up included PSX² (too mathy) and The Sony Yakuza (too politically incorrect).

Well, whatever Sony decides as the moniker, Lafleur wins the award for keeping the name game in perspective: "I'm not so much concerned with the name on top, as much as what's inside."

Where to Improve?

Looking at the original Japanese PS model (the SCPH-1000, for those keeping score), here's where developers sought 64-Bit hardware improvements inside and out. This is a cumulative list of their suggestions:

Inside:



1. **What's There Now:** The Graphics Processing Unit. **What Developers Want:** Built-in hardware for more graphics effects: perspective correction of texture mapping (prevents texture warp); texture filtering and blending (makes pixels less apparent); fogging-in (objects and terrain in distance appear smoothly, rather than pop up); moving light and varied point, spot and omni light sourcing (improved lighting effects); mip mapping (removes pixel crawl and shimmer); more flexible translucency (visual effect); subpixel texture interpolation or antialiasing (softens textures and sprite edges).

2. **What's There Now:** The CPU. 33MHz R3000 RISC from LSI Logic. **What Developers Want:** A 64-Bit (duh!) 100MHz or higher RISC with these additional functions: Z-sort plus optional Z-buffering (reduces polygon dropout); Z-distance blurring (adds perspective to game scenes); asynchronous processing with GPU (ups polygon count).

3. **What's There Now:** 1K Data Cache in CPU. **What Developers Want:** 2-4K to store more variables and tables into this "fast RAM" cache (speeds up CPU's number-crunching duties).

4. **What's There Now:** 32-Bit Main Bus. **What Developers Want:** 64-Bit Main Bus (duh again!) for larger data pipeline (increases polygon count, redraws speed).

5. **What's There Now:** No floating-point coprocessor. **What Developers Want:** A floating-point coprocessor (speeds up graphics calculations).

6. **What's There Now:** 2MB of Main RAM. **What Developers Want:** 8-16MB RAM, possibly dual-ported for simultaneous GPU and CPU use (more room for game data storage).

7. **What's There Now:** 1MB of Video RAM. **What Developers Want:** 4-8MB of VRAM. Costly but vital improvement (ups space for texture map storage).

8. **What's There Now:** 512K of Audio RAM. **What Developers Want:** 1-2MB of RAM (store more sound effects, voice-overs).

9. **What's There Now:** 16-Bit Sound Processor with 44.1 KHz sample rate. **What Developers Want:** Higher compression rate—4:1 or 8:1—for more sound effects at a higher sample rate (improves audio quality); surround-sound encoding (for home theater compatibility).

Outside:

1. **What's There Now:** 128K memory card. **What Developers Want:** 256K or higher standard card (offers greater game save space).

2. **What's There Now:** Standard PS controller. **What Developers Want:** Analog control with small joysticks (great for 3-D games); a fully raised D-pad (improves diagonal movement); more buttons.

3. **What's There Now:** 2x-speed CD-ROM drive. **What Developers Want:** 4-10x-speed drive (reduces game load times); improved CD streaming (allows CD data access while Red Book audio is playing); multiple Yellow Book audio track streaming (for interactive music).

4. **What's There Now:** Separate A/V, S-Video and Multi AV output. **What Developers Want:** Developers don't care, but Sony has already consolidated all those ports into the Multi AV output. It'll keep manufacturing costs down.

contd. from page 66

Z-sort," Botti said. The catch? The PS64 would need to preserve Z-sort capability to remain backward compatible with the PS. Still, the addition of a Z-buffer would do more good than harm. "Having hardware support for Z buffering would greatly enhance the PS64's ability to draw deep landscapes that stretch far into the horizon without having to subdivide the landscape into multiple polygons," he said.

Out of all the PS' current components, it's perhaps sound that needs the least improvement—Sony's expertise in audio once again shines through. "The way Sony has produced the sound system for the PlayStation is excellent," Tallarico said, and contends it has "the best and easiest sound driver in the whole industry." Although the PS' audio RAM is only 512K, it uses a 4:1 compression ratio that makes it the equal of 2 MB of memory—a respectable figure, Tallarico said. However, if he could tweak the sound specs for the PS64, he'd seek a "1 MB sound chip...with either 4:1 or 8:1 compression" making it equivalent to 8 MB.

Of course, no PS64 wish list would be complete without a sped-up CD-ROM drive that would eliminate a major pet peeve about PS games—loading times. Developers generally agreed a 6x- or 8x-speed drive would be the PS64's most cost-effective CD-ROM player. A DVD drive would be an appealing addition to the PS64, making it effectively a next-generation video as well as video game player and exposing it to an even larger mass market. Since DVD drives can play CDs, it could still work with current PS titles. Still, the developers who broached the topic of DVD called it neither necessary nor cost-effective. "The amount [of data] you have now on CD—more than 650 MB—is more than enough for storage," Lafleur said.

Going back to the earthquake analogy: When will the PS64 actually hit? At this point in time, any predictions would be just that: predictions.

One *P.S.X.* industry source last May caught wind of a "possible" marketing plan that had the PS64 debuting by this May—perhaps this year's E³ show in June—coinciding with a Japanese launch by the end of 1997. Although PS developers aren't privy to Sony's marketing plans, they took the rumors of a '97 launch with a grain of NaCl. "The system can't be out for a year or two," Douglas said. "If it was coming out this year, we [the development community] would've certainly heard about it by now—otherwise, they wouldn't have any games for it."

The developers *P.S.X.* talked to have yet to see (or at least admit seeing) PS64 development gear or final specs, which makes a '97 launch less likely. "The only thing I've been told is that the Japanese will have PS64 development systems within a year," Botti estimated. "I believe the Americans will get their hands on systems about a year after that. That's usually how it works, although I have no confirmation."

At this point, a June '98 PS64 launch in Japan seems the most viable scenario. Douglas and others predicted a Sept. '98 target date for the PS64 in North America, with a European release in early '99.

Well, no matter what Sony builds into the PS64—backward compatibility or not, DVD or CD—the gamers and developers will come to support it. That is, if the PS64's hardware fully illustrates a quantum leap in gameplay. "[Sony's] got to be able to show a 10-fold leap in performance over the current PS for the PS64 to be successful," predicted Douglas.

So, *P.S.X.* asks readers: What would you like to see in the PS64? Send in ideas, suggestions, blueprints; *P.S.X.* plans to print the best responses and an update of this story in a future issue. X

How About a Hot Body?

Looks may not be everything, but they certainly go a long way in enhancing a video game machine's image. A system may call itself "next-generation," but it's got to look the part to play the part.

The PS' console designer, Sony Corp. art director Teiyu Goto, did an amazing job with the streamlined gray box design of the current system—very clean, and certainly eye-catching. So how can the PS64 one-up an already great visual appearance?

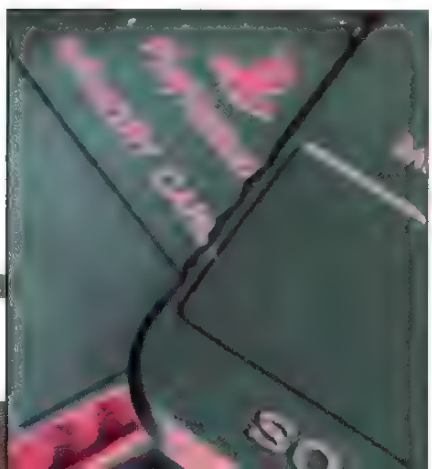
PS developers had plenty of ideas for Sony's designers. The first step is to trash the gray color. "If they really want to make it mass-market—like a video recorder—I suppose you'd have to make it a basic black," Core Design's Paul Douglas offered. "Or maybe the silver polish finish" similar to that used with Nintendo's Pocket Game Boy, he added.

Black Ops' John Botti envisioned a machine "the same size as the original, except I would choose black as a color, so that the consumer could immediately see that it was almost the same," as the original—especially if the PS64 offered backward compatibility. "Yet the color change and new logo would suggest more power under the hood," Botti said.

Tommy Tallarico suggested a white-colored PS64, which he said would give it a "very hip, very '90s, very futuristic" *Star Wars*-type look and appeal to it.

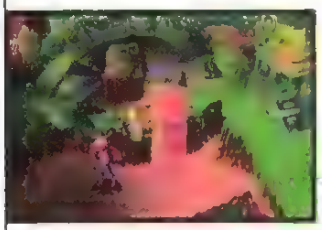
But aside from color, Dreamworks Interactive's Patrick Gilmore wanted the PS64 to look—and act—like something akin to a home entertainment component, which he could easily hook up to his stereo. Gilmore wanted the machine to be "slightly smaller, with a front-loading CD bay so that I can put it on a small shelf."

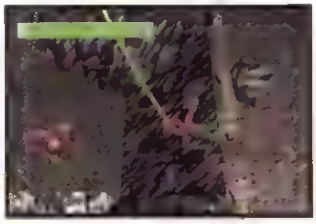
"WRITING GAMES FOR THE PLAYSTATION IS LIKE DRIVING A MERCEDES-BENZ SL-500 AS OPPOSED TO DRIVING A $500, 20-YEAR-OLD BUCKET OF BOLTS."
– BLACK OPS' JOHN BOTTI



How the PS64 Can Improve Game Quality

Video game players don't give a rat's ass about whatever hardware improvements the PS64 may have. All they want to know is this: How can the PS64 make games more fun to play? Developers illustrate how their "tech talk" can translate into a sweeter video game experience on the PS64:

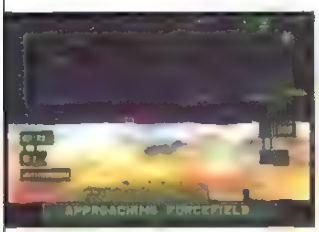


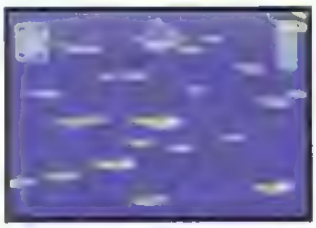


Crash Bandicoot's 2-D foliage looks nice, but in a game like Pitfall 3D, the PS lacks the horsepower to create a convincing jungle setting for Harry.

• The Problem: The development team for Activision Studios' Pitfall 3D decided not to set the game totally in the jungle as in previous games because it just wouldn't look decent. "Drawing all the leaves, all the plants, all the foliage, would just be very difficult to do in 3-D," admitted Activision's John Lafleur. Games such as Crash Bandicoot and Tomb Raider have tried to create jungles by using 2-D objects for trees and plants. It works—sometimes. "A complaint I've heard from some gamers is, 'I like this greenery, it's nice, but when I walk through it, I know I'm walking through a piece of paper," Lafleur said.

• The 64-Bit Solution: With a larger, 64-Bit bus, more VRAM for texture storage, and more main RAM for polygons, developers would be able to draw vast, realtime 3-D environments populated with more 3-D objects to replace those flat, 2-D images—the net result is a more convincing 3-D world to explore. "So maybe the next Pitfall 3D will be set in the jungle," Lafleur said.

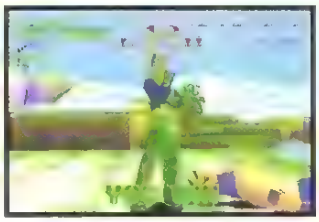


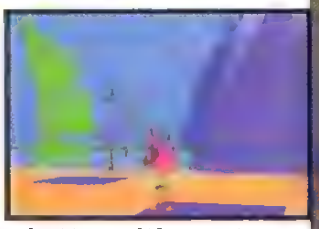


More RAM would make for even larger flight areas in games such as Independence Day, and a greater variety of fish in Aquanaut's Holiday.

• The Problem: 2 MB of main RAM limits creativity.

• The 64-Bit Solution: With eight or more MB of RAM, developers could store more 3-D models and larger game maps for deeper levels and a greater variety of enemies. For instance, in a game like Black Dawn, the added RAM could store "eight to 12" types of enemy tanks instead of maybe "two or three," said Black Ops' John Botti.

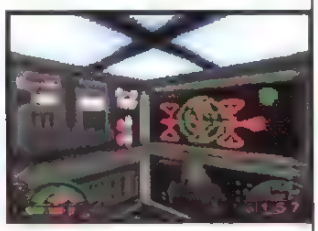




Games that would look even better with greater texture mapping (via additional video RAM) include simply shaded Tobal No. 1 and plain ol' Bubsy 3D.

• The Problem: The limited 1 MB of PS video RAM limits the variety and size of polygon textures.

• The 64-Bit solution: Doubling or quadrupling the amount of VRAM would give a game's look far greater variety. For instance, a PS64 game could store 20 or 30 different explosions in VRAM. "A gasoline tanker should have a different explosion animation than a HEAT round penetrating an enemy tank's reactive armor," Botti cited as an example.



2Xtreme shows why it's dangerous to get close to elephants, or walls in Dark Forces. Both textures can be smoothed out with 64-Bit technology.

• The Problem: With some PS games, textures up close look blocky because texture maps are blown up in size. You can notice it in plenty of 3-D PS games when you walk close to walls. "In Agile Warrior: F-111X" for the PS, said Botti, "we had 2-D fire animations that pixelate heavily when the player flies close to them."

• The 64-Bit Solution: Built-in texture filtering and blending hardware similar to the Nintendo 64 would mask harsh pixels by smoothing the surface and edges where contrasting pixels clash. The 3-D environments and 2-D sprites lose their "chunky" look to them, so games just look more realistic. An added bonus, according to Lafleur, is that games would no longer need prerendered backgrounds like those in Resident Evil and Final Fantasy VII, to preserve that "smooth" look. "You can draw convincing realtime 3-D environments on-the-fly," Lafleur said.

• The Problem: A small 512K audio RAM prohibits extensive audio interaction with the current PS.

• The 64-Bit Solution: With additional audio RAM, developers can use the space to create the illusion that the computer is "talking to you" while playing, for example. "In Black Dawn, we had about 20 very short phrases that your commander would say during your mission," Botti cited as an example. Additional audio RAM would've given Black Dawn more phrases to use in the game.

STRATEGY Xtra

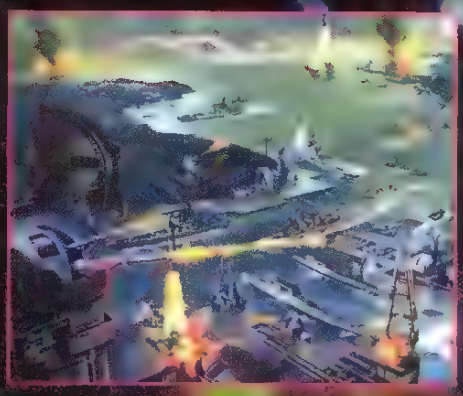
How to win at EA's

SOVIET STRIKE

GOT YOUR SIGHTS ON THE LATER LEVELS?

CRIMEA - WORSTCASE
BLACK SEA - GRANDTHEFT
CASPIAN - GROZNEY
DRACULA - CHERNOBYL
KREMLIN - CIVILWAR

There's nothing like a good suicide mission to start off the day. Madmen and terrorists are wreaking havoc upon the free world, and it's your job to put an end to it. You will be piloting a Super Apache, loaded to the hilt with the latest technology and weaponry. This strategy was completed with the Apache configured with a Balanced [illegible] and Sidewinders on the wing tips. The five stages have been broken down to give you tips to each individual mission and the location of hidden items. The maps do not display the locations of supplies that are shown on your Super Multifunctional Display. Knowing the whereabouts of additional supplies will give you the biggest edge when attempting a mission. Remember, managing your weapons arsenal is of vital importance. Many good men died to supply you with this top-secret information. Use it wisely. The world needs you.

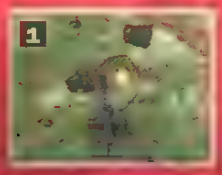


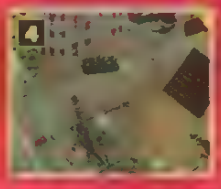
General Earle heads up the Strike Net operation with the help of Andrea Grey and Hack, your communications officer.

ICON KEY

- Ammo
- Sidewinders
- Cluster Missiles
- Super Gun
- Cargo Drop
- Fuel
- Armor
- Attempts
- Winch
- Assets

CRIMEA STRIKE

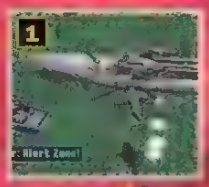




You will need to clear the obstructions from the courtyard for Nick to be able to make his escape.

In the far Southeast you will find Santa and his sleigh. Blow up the sleigh to reveal an extra attempt.

BLACK SEA STRIKE



MISSION #1 and #2 - The first two missions can be done hand-in-hand. Destroy the radar closest to home base first. You will be interrupted to save a fueling station to the northwest. While you are in the area, you may also want to head west to the POW camp and take out the enemies there. Now, instead of hitting the second radar, take your time to clear the docks. The rest of this strike will take place over the water, so having resources readily available on-shore will be important. Destroying the second radar will bring out enemy forces trying to kill friendlies. Lose too many Ugarians and this mission is over.

MISSION #3 - The best way to destroy the Pickets is to hit them from the side with a Sidewinder missile (2). The Speed Boats are a complete nuisance to have buzzing around. A single Hellfire missile will take them out. Stay to the outside of the Pickets or you will be dealing with choppers from the Carrier.

MISSION #4 - The Carrier is guarded by an entourage of Hind Helicopters. If all of them get airborne, you will have your hands full. The Carrier itself is a breeze. The back end is lightly armed, leaving you an easy shot at the Conning Tower. Don't worry about the guns on the front, they are nearly impossible to destroy, so just stay out of their way.

MISSION #5 - The ICBMs are located in the two ships that are the farthest east. Take out the turrets, being extra careful not to set off these nuclear devices. Hoist up the ICBMs and drop them into the water. Once again you will be interrupted, this time with an attack on the Western LZ. It's not essential to stop this, but there is some ammo and fuel that will be destroyed if you don't.

MISSION #6 - Fly all the way to the southwest corner and approach the Destroyer Vinograd from there. Several quick passes, hitting it with everything you've got is your best tactic (2).

MISSION #7 - Make haste to the charges that have been dropped to the East. Grab the farthest one first and then work your way to the closer ones. Drop one on each sub to destroy them.

MISSION #8 - Attack this Cruiser from the back side. You will want to deal with it the same way you did the Destroyer. A couple of quick passes, hitting it hard with everything you've got. Just be sure to pick up Amad when he jumps ship (3). It's not necessary to destroy Vlad's boat as he escapes.

MISSION #9 - The Landing Craft will be unloading an invasion force of Amphibious Tanks. The tanks are slow and poorly armored, making them easy targets. Destroy them with Hellfires before they escape. The Landing Craft are sitting ducks once the tanks are gone. Now head for home!

These supplies will take some extra maneuvering to pick up and be patient.

CASPIAN STRIKE

[illegible] up [illegible] you [illegible] here). [illegible] and his forces [illegible] of the [illegible] Tanks. You [illegible] up Nimrud. Fly him down to pass #1 and drop him at the OP there. Blast the boulders here and [illegible] the forces of Heavy Tanks. When you run low on [illegible] the supplies here and then head to Pass #2. Forget about using Delilah. Her forces are weak and [illegible] the attack there, turn your attention to helping Nimrud defeat the forces attacking at Pass #3.

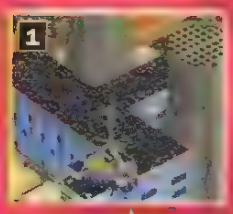
MISSION #4 Before you attempt this mission, I would suggest taking care of [illegible] Too many [illegible] hillside [illegible]

MISSION #5 [illegible] There is [illegible] attack the [illegible] no threat here [illegible] them to shoot up the plant [illegible] with them and move on.

MISSION #6 In the meantime, Savak's Elite Guard has been working its way up Pass #4 and then through #1. If they get themselves situated in front of the plant, there will be no stopping them. Saving yourself some Sidewinders will make this easier to deal with. Commence your attack from the rear (2). Don't hesitate on your bombing run or their missiles will [illegible] you out in a second. The remainder [illegible] Elite Guard can be found encamped [illegible]

[illegible] uncover [illegible] will begin to escape to the [illegible] until he reaches the oil well and use it to destroy him (3). I hope this doesn't affect gas prices.

DRACULA STRIKE



area from ZSUs attacking from the south. When Ivan is done, lift

MISSION #2 cleared the airfield, you have nothing to worry about. Just drop Ivan and prepare the laser for the strike. Otherwise, get there quickly or the laser will be destroyed. Once you have picked it up, drop it off at the dig site. Ivan will activate the laser and then you will have a very short time to rescue seven scientists and Ivan before the Tomahawks hit.

MISSION #1 and #2 - Save your supplies from the three enemies that will attack it. Now, head east to the asylum. Along the way, take out the convoy heading toward the graveyard. Take out the towers and Recon Vehicles surrounding the compound. Destroy the buildings for Ivan and scientists, then lift them to the dig site. The site will be attacked after you drop off the first and seventh scientist. You can only afford to lose three of these guys.

MISSION #3 and #4 - Before you head down to the reactor, clear the river of bridges with artillery, along with the airbases on the east side of the river. [illegible] concerns, followed by the bunkers. Blast [illegible]

MISSION #5 - [illegible] done. Drop Amad down to help the UN forces [illegible] Warsaw brigade. Head south to intercept the approaching reinforcements [illegible] and hit them from behind. [illegible]

MISSION #7 - Destroying all of the bridges prior to this

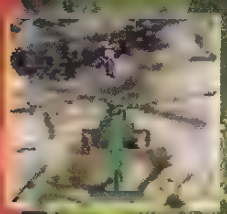
[illegible] is helpful. Local forces will help you from across the river. Just take out your neighbors and they will be the next.

MISSION #8 - [illegible] commander will reveal the launch sites. The SCUDs are hidden [illegible] silos. Blast the silos [illegible] they don't launch (2). [illegible] T-80s that have appeared on our radar, and this shouldn't give you much trouble.

MISSION #9 - The remaining UN forces will come under fire. Neutralize the threat and airlift the survivors to the Landing Zone to the west (3). The glowing soldiers [illegible] you any harm.

[illegible] to stop her [illegible] worry about [illegible] forward, they [illegible]

[illegible] your fire on the humans. Use the [illegible] and pierce the beast's [illegible]



Dracula's Castle hides extra ammo and....Elvis? That's funny, I thought I just saw him at the grocery store.

This airfield is heavily guarded and must be made secure for an upcoming airdrop.

KREMLIN STRIKE

MISSION #1 - Be sure to use the cargo [illegible] stay out of your business (1). Fly north at [illegible] before the hotel is destroyed. The Tolstoy House is surrounded by BMPs. Eliminate them and then drop off Andrea. Watch for [illegible].

MISSION #2 - Stop these trucks before they bl[illegible] Yeltsin's escape route. They will be traveling down two main roads. They're tough to nail with the Chain Gun, so use your missiles.

MISSION #3 - These guys are going straight for the Kremlin. Halt the progress of the three SCUD battering rams. This is immediately followed by shelling from both sides of the Kremlin. Take out the group to the west and then attack the other force of SKARs. It's not over [illegible] a chopper attack approaching from the east. Finish them off to complete this mission. The key to this mission is to utilize the supplies left for you inside the Kremlin walls.

MISSION #4 - Before you pick up Yeltsin, spend some time clearing the level of enemies. Once Yeltsin begins weaving his way to the airport, you will want to have the least amount of resistance possible. He will conveniently take you through all of the areas occupied by T-80s and even stop for a bite to eat. You don't need to waste ammo once he gets the hang of driving, just make sure he catches his flight out.

MISSION #5 - Upon reaching the air[illegible] Yeltsin's plane will be blocked by a row of tanks (2). Pick-ups will line the runway to try to stop Yeltsin's departure. The plane will take off successfully once you have disposed of the heavy artillery.

MISSION #6 - Alexi Kapanov is their first guess as to who is Shadowman. His headquarters is guarded by a handful of pick-up trucks. After breaking through his defenses, blow up his base. He will try to escape via the river. Stop him!

MISSION #7 - Upon apprehending Alexi, you will learn that he is not who you want. Your next target will be KGB Headquarters. I found that saving the Super Gun until this point worked out well. Trying to extract Boris without clearing the area of BMPs will be nothing but trouble. Once you have him, drop him in the bear pit at the zoo to get the info you need. He will send you to Lenin's Tomb. When you blow [illegible] you've been had.

MISSION #8 - Shadowman is escaping in a small plane from Red Square. You simply need to keep on this tough little plane until you riddle it with holes. Shadowman has one last card up his sleeve. ICBMs are being launched from Red Square. Stop their launch and continue after Shadowman. [illegible] back. Once you shoot him down, you need to race to Red Square to stop the launch of the last three ICBMs. Nobody said peace would be easy.

STRATEGY Xtra

TWISTED METAL 2 WORLD TOUR

The original Twisted Metal was one of the surprise hits of 1995. Single Trac, the game's developer, labored long and hard to create a worthy sequel. The fruit of their labor hit store shelves just in time for the holidays last year, and once again, Sony, the game's publisher, had another hit on their hands.

Having destroyed Los Angeles during the previous tournament, Calypso, the contest's enigmatic creator, decides to take his beloved Twisted Metal tournament global. This time, 12 of the world's best drivers square off in eight exotic locations to determine who can claim the title of Champion of Twisted Metal and the wish of his or her dreams.

In addition to enhanced graphics and better car handling, Single Trac really pumped up the level of difficulty for the sequel. We compiled this list of hints, secrets and cheats to help you through this challenging game.

The biggest innovation in Twisted Metal 2 is the addition of Advanced Attacks (see right). Without these players would be easy pickings for the other combatants, so use them often. Single Trac also added unique warp gates, shaped like red pentagons, to transport drivers to secret areas. Use these gates to escape particularly aggressive opponents or to find extra weapons and health pick-ups. Lastly, almost every level contains a full health-up. Memorize the locations of these and save them until your heath is almost completely depleted. With any luck, you might be the next champion of Twisted Metal. Be careful what you wish for, however. You just might end up getting it.

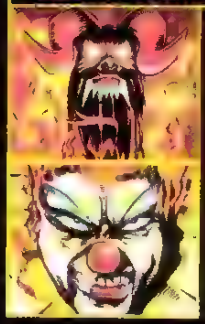
Advanced Attacks

NAPALM LOB:	▶ ◀ ▲
FREEZE BLAST:	◀ ▶ ▲
REVERSE WEAPON:	◀ ▶ ▼
DROP MINE:	▶ ◀ ▼
JUMP:	▲ ▲ ◀
SHIELD:	▲ ▲ ▶
INVISIBILITY:	▶ ▼ ◀ ▲

Unlike the first Twisted Metal, the drivers in TM2 have an arsenal of weapons that can be called upon at any time, without having to find special icons. These so-called Advanced Attacks are performed by pressing certain button combinations on the directional pad. Doing so depletes your Advanced Attack Meter, but don't worry; the meter slowly replenishes itself over time. Use the Advanced Attacks in combination with standard weapons to inflict maximum pain. Try freezing your opponent, then launch your Special Attack. Also try raising your shield then turbo into an unsuspecting victim. This works particularly well with heavy cars.

Secret Characters

MINION:	L1 ▲ ▼ ◀
SWEET TOOTH:	▲ L1 △ ▶



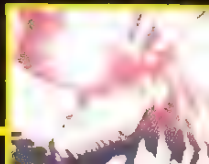
Two of TM's most fearsome competitors have returned for the second tournament as hidden characters. To access them, go to Character Select and enter the above codes. Enter the codes properly, and you will hear an explosion. Scroll in either direction to find the two drivers.

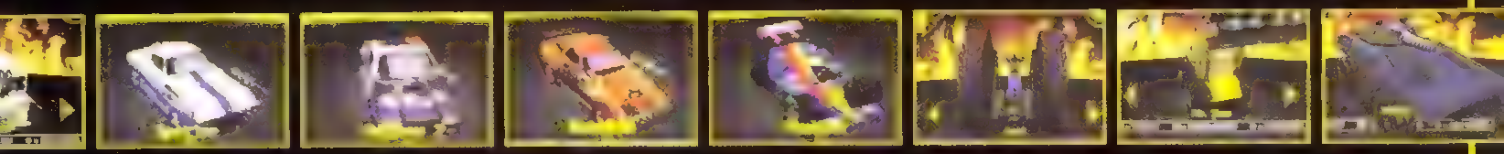
Secret Levels*

JET MOTO SWAMP:	▲ ▼ ▶ R1
CYBURBIA:	▼ ▲ L1 R1
L.A. ROOFTOPS:	▼ ◀ R1 ▼

The game gurus at Single Trac were kind enough to include two of the best levels, the sprawling Cyburbia and the classic L.A. rooftops, from the original TM. They even included a track from their hot new racer, Jet Moto. Just go to Battleground Select and enter the above codes. Note: A picture for the secret levels will not appear. Simply press Start after the explosion to access these awesome battlegrounds.

* TWO-PLAYER ONLY



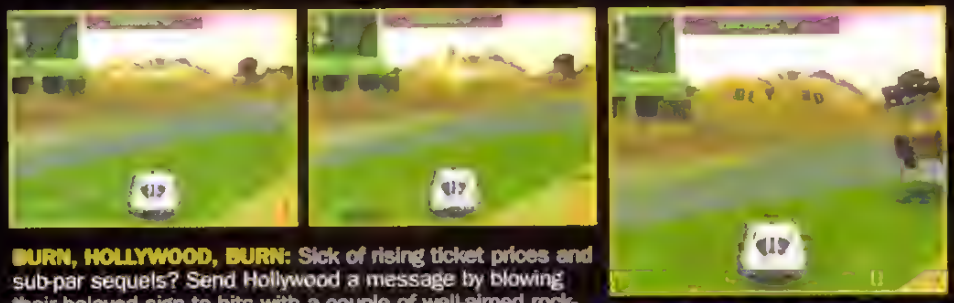


Individual Level Codes

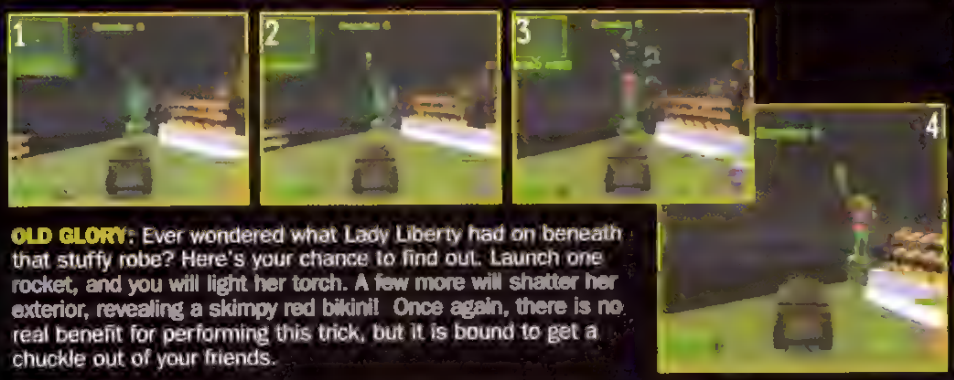
	MOSCOW	PARIS	AMAZONIA	NEW YORK	ANTARCTICA	DENMARK	HONG KONG	DARK TOOTH
Hammerhead								
Outlaw 2								
Warthog								
Mr. Grimm								
Grasshopper								
Thumper								
Spectre								
Roadkill								
Twister								
Axel								
Mr. Slam								
Shadow								

Just can't seem to beat a certain level? Want to skip ahead and see the ending for one of your favorite drivers? Here are the level codes for every car and level in Twisted Metal 2. Sorry, there are no codes for Sweet Tooth or Minion, so you're on your own.

Interactive Backgrounds



BURN, HOLLYWOOD, BURN: Sick of rising ticket prices and sub-par sequels? Send Hollywood a message by blowing their beloved sign to bits with a couple of well-aimed rockets. That's not all, however. In Paris, drive into the Louvre and napalm a few of those priceless treasures for some interesting results. The same thing can be done to the banners in Moscow. These tricks really don't affect the outcome of the levels, but they are interesting, nonetheless.

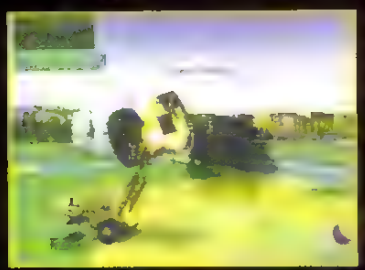


OLD GLORY: Ever wondered what Lady Liberty had on beneath that stuffy robe? Here's your chance to find out. Launch one rocket, and you will light her torch. A few more will shatter her exterior, revealing a skimpy red bikini! Once again, there is no real benefit for performing this trick, but it is bound to get a chuckle out of your friends.

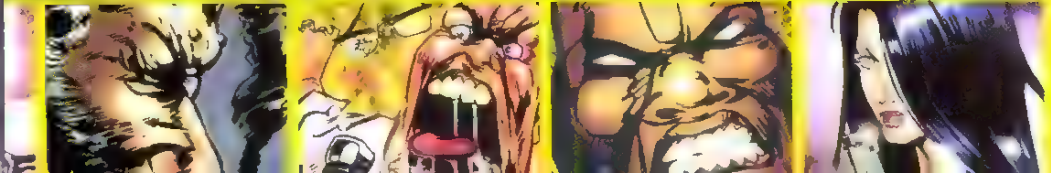
Final Boss Revealed

DARK TOOTH: The final Boss of TM2 makes Minion look like a certain little old lady from Pasadena. Dark Tooth, the father of Sweet Tooth, is more than a little upset about the loss of his "little clown boy," and he holds you responsible. For his size, Dark Tooth attacks with surprising speed. Lure him into the temple and collect the lightning bolt icons to give him a shocking surprise. Then pick up the health icon on the upper level to replenish your health bar. Don't relax after you defeat him, because his head still has a little fight left in it...

Weapon Combos



Mr. Slam can combine attacks in a particularly nasty way. First, seize a car in his deadly slam attack. While the unlucky opponent is in your grips, repeatedly launch missiles and punish him or her with machine-gun fire. If you are feeling particularly nasty, use your freeze burst during the final slam. Continue the assault to finish your frozen foe. This technique will make short work of even the toughest opponent. It also works to a lesser extent with Twister, who also has the ability to seize opponents in her grasp. Because of the chaotic nature of her vortex spin, be sure to raise your shield to prevent getting hit with your own weapons, such as ricochet bombs.



Tricks of the trade

Do you have a trick or want a tip on your favorite game? Let us know—write us at:

PSX.

Tricks of the Trade
1920 Highland Ave.
Lombard, IL 60148

MK Trilogy Update

We've received a number of letters regarding our MK Trilogy strategy in the January issue. Apparently, some of the moves we listed were not executable. We're not certain what the source of this problem was, but here are the correct versions of the moves in question:

Fatalities:
Rain: D, D, B, F, HK
Kano: B, D, F, LP
Kung Lao: Hold LP, B, F, release and guide to cut off opponent's head.

Friendship:
Kung Lao: B, B, B, D+HK

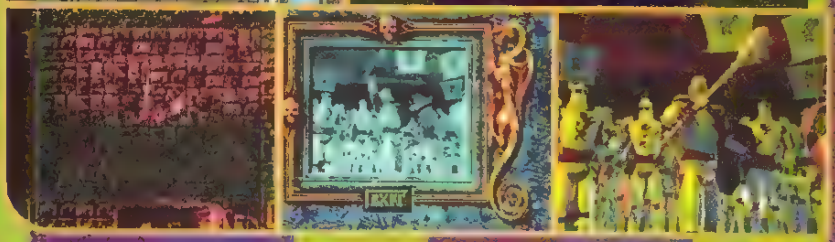
Pit:
Kung Lao: F, F, F, HP

Thanks to **Nick Hankins** of **Pleasant Hill, MO** for pointing out the mistake.

Legacy of Kain

Blood Cheat/Cinema Code

Here are a couple of great tricks to enter within your next game of Kain. In order to replenish Kain's blood just enter: Up, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left within the game while it's not paused. The blood meter should then fill to the top, if done correctly. In order to view all of the cinemas in the game, enter the code Left, Right, Square, Circle, Up, Down, Right, Left within the game while it's not paused. If done correctly, you should be able to access all of the FMVs in the "Dark Diary" without going through the entire game.



Power Move Pro Wrestling

Three Hidden Players

These tricks will give you three hidden characters to wrestle for you. Go to the Title Screen and enter one or all of the codes. For **Sparrow**, enter Circle, Right, Triangle, Up, Square, Left, Triangle, Up, Circle, Right, Select. Then press Select again on Commandant on the Player Select Screen. For **Gorgon** (the Ring Announcer), enter L1, L1, L2, R2, R2, R1, Triangle, Down, X, Up, Select. Then press Select again on Orange from the Player Select Screen. For you to play as **Sallie** (the Referee), enter Up, Down, Left, Right, Triangle, X, Square, Circle, L1, R1, L2, R2, Select. Then press Select again on El Temblor from the Player Select Screen. Let's get ready to rumble!

Star Gladiator

Head and Feet Code

This code will allow your character to have a big head and big feet. After choosing your character, press and hold Right, Start, Circle and Square simultaneously. Hold them until the round begins to get a strange character. Doing the same code holding Left instead will give you shrunken heads.

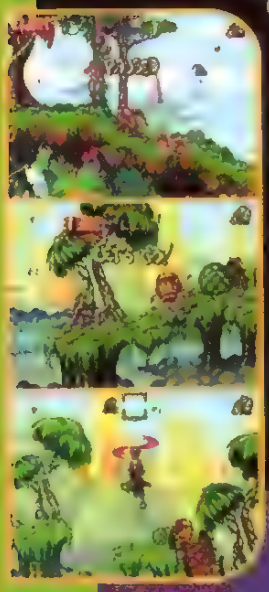
Tricks of the trade

The Adv. of Lomax

Level Select/Flying Trick

This is a great trick to skip Lomax to various levels in the game. To do this, press Down + Start when in a game. This will pause the game. Now, hold Up and hit: Triangle, Circle, X and Square. A small number should appear on the left side of the screen. This is the Level Select. Change the level by pressing L1 + Select. Then hit L1 + Start when you want to choose that particular level.

Plus, here's a little added bonus! Lomax will also have the ability to fly around the screen by pressing L1 + Square. This can only be done after the Level Code is active. By flying around you can get to places that are normally hard to reach. Just press L1 + Square again to go back down to Earth. Just make sure you watch where you are planning to land!



Blast Chamber

Level Passwords

The following codes can be entered on the Password Screen to start you at various points in the game:

NAEMMAAB (Ziguguraf)
MAGDIEAH (Backstab)
NINKPDME (Fall N Arch)
MJKKAMKC (Fugitive)
JODPIGEH (Rainbow)
ICJPABNA (Lavapalooza)

Hit the X button to activate the code once it has been entered.

Samurai Shodown III

Play as Zankuro

Here's a way to play as the hidden Boss, Zankuro! To select him, choose Vs. Mode and go to the Character Select Screen. Hold down the Start button and highlight the following characters in order. Start on Haohmaru and then go to Genjuro, Basara, Kyoshiro, Ukyo, Rimururu, Haohmaru, Shizmaru, Nakoruru, Hanzo, Amakusa, Gaira, Galford and then Shizmaru. Continue holding Start and then press X and Circle at the same time. If you have done it correctly, Zankuro will appear as a selectable character. Now you will be able to play as Zankuro, the Boss.

PANDEMONIUM!

Enter these codes on the Password Screen for the various results as shown.
EVILDEAD=Immorta Enemies. They keep coming back.
TWISTEYE=Rock 'N Roll. Hold L1 and L2. Move the direction pad left or right to rotate the screen. Pull it down to center it again.
INANDOUT Just V s ting. It allows you to quit in midgame as normal, but rather than go back to the Main Screen, you can carry on, or restart another, or do the same eve (you must have reached more than one evel). If you want to go back to the Main Screen, repeat the quit procedure on the Leve Se ect Screen.
THETHING=Mutant Mania.

Hold L2 and press the Circle button to cycle through odd shapes of your body. L2 + X swaps your body back.
HARDBODY=Can't Touch This. You will be invincible!
BODYSWAP=Gender Bender. Press the Triangle button to swap characters in midgame.
OTTOFIRE=Permanent Weapon. Basica y, you won't ose your weapon once you get t unless you switch weapons.
VITAMINS=Life of the Party. 31 lives are at your disposal.
CORONARY Hearts Aplenty You get loads of extra hearts.
TOMMYBOY Full Tilt. Finish and you'll get to p ay th s!
CASHDASH=Speed Greed. Th s is the bonus level after a norma level is finished.
BORNFREE=The World's Your Oyster. Now you can p ay any world you want.

Tricks of the trade

MACHINE HEAD

To enter the Infinite Ammo and Energy codes, go to the Main Menu and input the following:

Infinite Ammo: **Circle, Circle, Circle, Circle, L1, Circle, L1, L1, Circle, L1, Circle, L1, L1, Circle, L1, Circle, L1, L1, L1, L1.**
Infinite Energy: **Circle, L1, L1, L1, Circle, L1, Circle, Circle, L1, Circle, Circle, Circle, L1, L1, L1, L1, L1, Circle, Circle, L1.**

To enter level passwords, go to the Password Screen and input the following:

Level 1.2: **SQDZF05TJJ**
Leve 1.3: **HYM7G0DECM**
Leve 1.4: **EPPGH0XWDQ**
Level 2.1: **I54FH0D5BF**
Level 2.2: **E94FH0LLKJ**
Level 2.3: **MHLFH0DTCM**
Level 2.4: **ALLFH0XGPU**
Level 2.5: **BDNJH0LLPU**
Level 3.1: **5SBGH0XIKJ**
Level 3.2: **E9GGH0JIQH**
Level 3.3: **9F0JG0LZJD**
Level 3.4: **SKAGH09P40**
Level 4.1: **JJ0BNN9FCM**
Level 4.2: **EYWJH0P7BF**
Level 4.3: **JQNFH0T7BF**
Level 4.4: **7G9DA0M0CE**
Final Level: **6H9DA0QJ2F**

Namco Museum Volume 2

Extra Ship

Having trouble knocking off all those aliens? It takes a steady hand to pull this one off! In order to gain an extra ship in the game Gaplus, begin your game then wait until all of the alien ships come together, not shooting at any. After this, shoot at the second ship from the left on the bottom row. If done correctly, a flag should appear. Snag the flag and you will be rewarded with an extra ship to help you achieve the highest score in the game!

Street Racer

Secret Cups

Access the Options Screen and then move down and highlight the Cup Password Option. Enter the following passwords to get the various results.

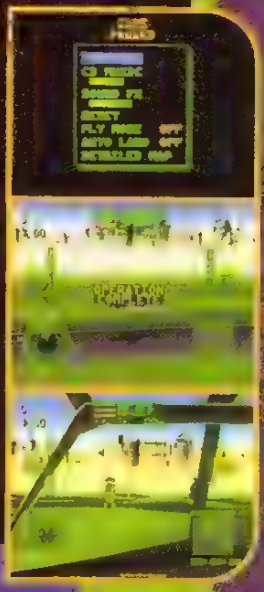
TRAFIK: Silver Cup
NEJATI: Gold Cup
DOUGAL: Platinum Cup
TURGAY: Advanced

Black Dawn

Various Cheats

Here are several cheats to enter during the game. To access a Two-Player Mode (where it's you against a friend), go to the Main Title Screen and press **Select+R2** on both controllers at the same time. You should hear a sound if done correctly. Go into the Options Menu and back to the Main Title Screen. You should find a Two-Player Option that will let you play in an exciting Deathmatch Mode. To enable the in-game cheats, begin a game and pause. Then press **Select, L2, Select, R2** and enter any of the following for various results.

Max Fuel/Ammo: **Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Circle.**
Max Weapons: **L1, L2, R1, R2.**
Summon Wingman: **Square, Square, Square, Circle.**
Mission Complete: **Triangle, Triangle, Triangle, Down, Down, Down.**
Upgrade Current Weapon: **L1, L1, R1, R1.**
Screen Toggle: **Down, R1, R2.**
You should hear, "Way to go!" if the code was entered correctly.



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